
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
AND
CATHOLIC FAITH
INVESTIGATED.

Price Three Shillings and Sixpence, sewed in blue.

PRINCIPLES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION



THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

PRINCIPLES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION
AND
CATHOLIC FAITH
INVESTIGATED

BY THE

Rev. Lewis Brittain,

REGENT of the ENGLISH COLLEGE at BORNHEM.

*Beware lest any man impose upon you by philosophy, and vain
deceit; according to the tradition of men, according to the rudiments
of the world, and not according to Christ. Coloss. ii. v. 8.*

L O N D O N:

Printed by J. P. COCHLAN, No. 37. Duke Street,
Grosvenor Square.

M,DCC,XC.



C O N T E N T S.

P REFACE	- .	Page ix
Introduction	- .	1
CHAP. I. <i>Existence of God</i>	- .	3
— <i>Divine Attributes</i>	- .	11
CHAP. II. <i>Religion</i>	- .	14
— <i>Natural Religion</i>	- .	21
CHAP. III. <i>Reason subservient to Religion</i>		31
CHAP. IV. <i>Revelation</i>	- .	51
— <i>Mosaic Dispensation</i>	- .	58
— <i>The Messiah, or Revelation of the</i> <i>new Law</i>	- .	59
— <i>Christian Revelation proved</i>		ib.
— <i>Internal evidence</i>	- .	60
— <i>Character of Jesus Christ</i>		64
— <i>The Resurrection of our Saviour</i>		92
— <i>The Mysteries</i>	- .	112
— <i>The Divinity of our Saviour</i>		119

THE SECOND PART.

CHAP. I. <i>The Church</i>	- .	162
CHAP. II. <i>The Characteristics that distinguish the</i> <i>one true Church</i>	- .	171
— <i>Mortification and Penance</i>		178

CHAP. III.	<i>Unerring or infallible authority of the true Church</i>	-	193
CHAP. IV.	<i>The Rule of Catholic Faith</i>		226
—	<i>Scripture and Tradition</i>		233
—	<i>The Holy Fathers refer to Tradition</i>	- -	235
—	<i>Facts which determine submission to ancient Catholic Apostolic Tradition</i>	- -	239
—	<i>The Catholic Laity may rest secure on Church Authority</i>		250
CHAP. V.	<i>Heresy defined</i>	- -	267
—	<i>Not improper among Friends to reason on the Subjects of Religious Controversy</i>		288
—	<i>Catholic Belief relative to the Eucharist</i>	- -	289
—	<i>Why Christ gave us his flesh?</i>		297
—	<i>The primitive and perpetual Faith of the Church respecting the Eucharist</i>	- -	304
—	<i>Transubstantiation why not named</i>		307
—	<i>Communion in one kind</i>		<i>ib.</i>
—	<i>Other objections relative to Separatists obviated</i>	-	309
	CHAP.		

C O N T E N T S.

vii

CHAP. V.	<i>Can no Heretic be saved</i>	313
—	<i>May not all Sects being baptized and believing in Christ, be stiled Catholics</i>	314
—	<i>Why the Catholic Church does not allow all indiscriminately to read the Scripture</i>	317
—	<i>The Profession of Celibacy lau- dable</i>	320
—	<i>The Honor Catholics pay to Relics, Images, &c.</i>	323
—	<i>Pilgrimages</i>	324
—	<i>Indulgences</i>	325
—	<i>Penance, Confession, and Abso- lution</i>	326
—	<i>Has the Church coined new Articles of Faith</i>	328
—	<i>A Synopsis, or review of the Catho- lic Church</i>	329
—	<i>A view of the moral doctrine of the Catholic Church</i>	345

PREFACE.

CONTENTS

CHAS. V. Case re Henry V. 1547	213
May not all 25th being reported	
and being in fact, be held	
Catholics	214
It is the Catholic Church that has	
after all, consistently to hold	
the doctrine	215
The Hierarchy of Catholics has	
the right	216
The Roman Catholic Pope is King	
of Europe	217
Protestants	218
Indulgences	219
Protestant Confession and Absolution	220
Interdenominationalism	221
Has the Church ceased to be a Church	
of Faith	222
A Synthesis of the views of the Catholic	
Church	223
A view of the moral position of	
the Catholic Church	224

P R E F A C E.

BEFORE we enter on this treatise, it seems proper to premise, that we submit our judgment to the decisions of the Catholic Church. For error of judgment may admit of apology; though obstinacy in demonstrated error can not. And on this account, what writer soever has recourse to an *affected* confusion of every reasonable and necessary distinction; or on the other hand, as some seem to have done, to such sophisticated refinement as would confound common sense; or to the abuse of a certain flashy and imposing style, on purpose to baffle the most important truths, and to persist

in errors sufficiently exposed, is certainly inexcusable. In short, it is a sure sign of obstinate ignorance, to resolve never to correct our opinions; of levity, to be continually varying them; and of wisdom, to change them sometimes, on better intelligence.

The wisest counsel, for every sincere lover of truth, is; to ponder in his heart and dwell sufficiently upon each known fact and leading principle; nor ever to lose sight of these by a too eager engagement in particular, minute and endless questions.

We wish to offend no one. If, therefore, in the zealous pursuit of what to us appears a truth, in which we are all alike infinitely interested, any expression apparently harsh, respecting its adversaries, should escape our attention; it is not our meaning to give offence, either to any man living, or to any society of men.

Nay with respect to the best branch of the Reformation, as by law established
in

in our own country; many, we hope, of this persuasion, being invincibly ignorant of the necessity of *visibly* uniting with the perpetually visible Catholic Church, are in reality united with us in unfeigned Christian charity and benevolence. These are perhaps as zealous as we, in resisting the too glaring progress of modern libertinism and irreligion. For all of this description we have the most amicable feelings.

Every Separatist, however, who attacks *the doctrinal infallibility* of the one, great, original and visible Catholic Church, *established* by Christ himself, is sure to give a mortal wound to his own Persuasion. Because, on this fundamental tenet depend both the certainty and the authentic selection of the canonical books of scripture. This point, therefore, must be held as the common cause of all who pretend to be orthodox.

in our own country: there we hope
of the position being eventually
ignored of the necessity of a
union with the government.
The Church, and its various
as in unimpaired Christian charity and
benevolence. There are perhaps as
zealous as we in testing the too glaring
progress of modern liberalism and in-
ligion. For all of this delusion we
have the most amicable feelings.
Every Separatist, however, who at-
tacks the Church, and the Church
great, original and noble Catholic
Church, often says by Christ himself
him to give a moral weight to his own
Position. He looks on his friends
mental and moral, both the clergy
and the laity, as the foundation of the Church
moral books of the Church. The great
therefore, and he holds as the common
cause of all who are bound to be orthodox.

INTRODUCTION.

“**F**AITH is the substance of things to be
“ hoped for, the evidence of things that are not
“ seen.” Heb. xi. From which excellent definition it appears, that though the objects of faith are themselves, necessarily, invisible and incomprehensible; yet *sufficient evidence*, or proof of their existence, is granted.

In reviewing the *evident* foundations of the divine fabric of Christian faith, in order to be,
“ ready always to satisfy every one that asketh
“ us a reason of that hope which is in us.”
1 Peter, c. iii. v. 15. We must prove, 1. The Existence and Attributes of God. 2. Religion. 3. The proper use of Reason, relative to Religion. 4. Revelation. 5. The Church, or the depositary of Revelation. 6. The characteristics that distinguish the Catholic Church from all sects. 7. The unerring authority of the true Church. 8. The Rule of Catholic faith. 9. The nature and essence of Heresy.—On the other
B hand

hand, the enemies of revealed Religion; whose vain attempt is to supersede all religious duties, by a false principle, referring *all* to this short life; generally proceed thus: They begin by denying the Infallibility of the Church of God: 2. They reject all guidance, but that of private judgment. 3. Guided by their presumptuous and prejudiced reason alone, they deny all miracles, as also the Divinity of our Saviour, the immortality of the soul, special providence, and every divine mystery. 4. Unable, by mere reason, to account for the conduct of God in the present state and government of the universe, they consequently and naturally glide down into the bottomless pit of absurd scepticism, whence their sole and gloomy prospect is despair.

CHAPTER I.

EXISTENCE of GOD, and of his DIVINE
ATTRIBUTES.

WHAT is the first requisite, or principal foundation of faith?

A *firm and entire* conviction of the existence of God: that is, of the spiritual, eternal, self-existent, infinitely perfect, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, all-good Being; from whose free bounty all things proceed. "Without *(this)* faith it is impossible to please God: "for he that cometh to God, must believe that "he is, and is the rewarder of them that seek "him." Heb. xi. 6.*

If the existence of God is the foundation of all faith, is it not also clear and evident?

* N. B. *The scriptural texts are cited from the Catholic translation, published anno 1609, reprinted 1750.*

So evident, as to seem rather obscured than illustrated, by every attempt to reduce it to artificial argumentation. As it is the hardest task, to prove self-evident principles: for instance, that two and two make four. But nature itself demonstrates the existence of its Creator: for, that no effect can exist without an adequate cause, is a certain principle, and supercedes all subtle or metaphysical disquisition. Had nothing been from all eternity, nothing could be at present. Nay since we behold in the creation, an eminent species, of rational beings, *effected*; therefore, without any logical effort, we infer the existence of a rational *Cause*. And hence, not only the heavens declare to all nations the glory of God, their Creator; but all men on earth must likewise own: "He made us, not we ourselves." Ps. xcix. For our original formation itself exceeds even our comprehension.

In short, if the existence of God were less obvious to right reason, than it already is; it would be here not only a proper enterprise, but also a delightful occupation, to expatiate, with David, through the whole range of nature, to remark the order visible in its disposition; and then, by dwelling on each distinct part, to
contemplate

contemplate the variety of its beauties; and as it were, to taste the honey of every flower in the creation.

At present, let this suffice: that, if we do not shut our eyes, the immense orbs which, incessantly whirled, pursue their *regular* courses through the pathless ether; the exquisite structure of all the aerial, terrestrial and aquatic animals, adapted to the peculiar nature and end of each species; the variety, fecundity and beauty of the innumerable plants and flowers that cover the earth; the admirable formation and faculties of man himself; and especially the evident art, with which the several parts of the whole creation are connected together in one complete plan; demonstrate the existence of an infinitely wise Being, who is the first Cause of their existence, the prime Motor and sole Ruler of the universe; that is, God.

Nay it should even seem that, to preclude all doubt, the Creator has allotted to all the moving orbs, the most unnatural and forced kind of motion, that is, either circular, or elliptic.

This fundamental truth, this important principle, appears too obviously evident to need further elucidation.

Since God is, to us, invisible; has the Atheist no plausible reason to doubt of his existence?

None at all. We do not indeed *see* God; because it is impossible that our corporeal eye should see an essence purely spiritual; yet, (not to alledge here the original and authentic evidence of the Creator, transmitted by inviolable tradition from Adam to Moses; or the unanimous assent of all succeeding ages) certain it is, that our reason clearly discovers his existence; since, through all nature, we behold such regularity, proportion, order, and *intentional* subordination, as must proceed from some intelligent cause. This cause of the universal fabric, if self-existent, is God; if produced by another, either that other must be God; or, proceeding from cause to cause, as long as we choose, our investigation must ultimately terminate in a self-existent cause. For since nothing can produce itself, each effect produced must have its cause; and an infinite succession of finite causes and effects, alternately producing and produced, without any first origin, is visibly absurd. Now the original producer of all secondary causes can be no other but the true God. Right reason, therefore, rejects the Atheist's vague and wild conceit,

conceit, of an eternal or self-existent world; and absolutely requires an assignable first cause. It might then seem superfluous to add, that the known and, compared with eternity, even modern date of the first population and cultivation of various parts of the globe, and the recent invention of many arts and sciences, effectually preclude all claim to its pretended attribute of Eternity.

Again, it were equally vain to recur to an imaginary eternity of motion. For here likewise, the Atheist must suppose an effect without a cause: since whatever is moved requires a mover. And even supposing an eternal, self-existent, or uncaused motion: Either this motion (and the same argument is applicable to attraction) is intelligent, or not? If intelligent, it is God himself: if not, it could never produce the world. Because, we observe some parts of the creation in motion, others at rest; some using reflection and reason, others incapable of either: all these require an assignable cause, not only active and energetic, but also intelligent and free; without which, such diversity of effects is unaccountable.

Nay let the Atheist imagine, or feign, an eternity of both matter and motion: If these could
ever

ever produce Intelligence, then a whirligig may, in time, attain to Solomon's wisdom, and equal the architecture of his temple. But rational beings can proceed from none but a rational cause.

If atheism is, in fine, forced to have recourse to the fortuitous concourse of Epicurus's atoms, and to form an eventual world from their eternal agitation; the hypothesis, as Cicero says, *Lib. 2. de Nat. Deorum*, is as extravagant as to suppose the Annals of Ennius composed by a merely casual arrangement of all the letters in the alphabet, thrown forth at hazard.

Vain therefore and childish are all the arguments, ever dreamt of, to raise a doubt concerning the existence of the Creator. And if the Atheist consult common sense and right reason, he will find that though he does not *see* his Creator; which is his sole plausible objection; yet he sees such universal *Order*, as can proceed from no other assignable or possible cause. The conformation of that eye, with which he sees the order of the whole creation, is alone sufficient to indicate the all-wise Creator.

Finally, with relation to the whole human species: As the world is adapted to man, so is
man

man to the world. Suppose this world existing without mankind: it would be a mere pageant apparatus; a habitation well furnished, but destitute of its proper inhabitant. "He did not create it in vain, he formed it to be inhabited." Is. xlv. 18. We do not indeed discover the use and end of some parts, (as in a watch) yet seeing that the whole is an intentional work, every equitable judge must infer that such parts also were designed for some purpose.

If the existence of God is so demonstrable, how came it ever to be questioned?

Though our Creator has impressed his whole creation, as it were, with clear and legible characters, in order to direct us to himself; and though his works excite admiration and the most exquisite delight in all the wise; yet our reason is too liable to be biassed by inordinate self-love, prejudiced by the passions and bewildered by sensuality. Now sensuality is the parent of vice; and vice, of scepticism. And, thus corrupted: "The senseless man shall not know; nor will the fool understand these things." Ps. xci.

In

In general, three enemies conspire to oppose the entire admittance of this obvious and important truth, the divine existence: 1. The senses of each carnal man; which cannot perceive a spiritual essence. 2. His heart; which conscious of ill, dreads the penetrating light of a divine Judge. 3. His presumption; which affects to comprehend the whole nature and conduct of him, who is essentially incomprehensible; and failing in this presumptuous attempt, resolves to leave his very existence doubtful. Yet, of the three, the most ordinary harbinger of incredulity is, the corruption of the heart. Man naturally becomes reluctant, when he is to believe that which condemns his conduct. Hence: "The fool hath said in his heart, (*not in his conscious reason*) there is no God." Ps. xiii. *item* lii.

Such have always been the sentiments of carnal men. In spite however of their fond, *interested* and blasphemous wishes, the firm foundation of faith remains immoveably fixed.

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

Is nothing further required, than to admit the mere existence of a Deity?

Yes: we must admit, *the true God*, the Being, infinite in all perfection. We, therefore, must admit his attributes; for instance, Sanctity and Justice. For some men, unable to deny that there is a God, still regard him as walking on the wings of the winds, at an immense distance, and unmindful of our insignificant transactions here below. But this were to frame an ignorant, impotent, or indolent Deity; which is equivalent to an absolute denial of his existence.

“Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God?
 “For he hath said in his heart: He will not
 “require:” that is, judge. Ps. x. “For he hath
 “said in his heart: God hath forgotten us, he
 “hath turned away his face, not to see (*us*) to
 “the end:” *i. e.* never to regard us. *ibidem*.

In short, as it is not the mere existence, but the quality of his judge, that makes the conscious culprit shudder, and skulk from his sight: so it is not the mere or abstract existence of his God; but his attributes, of Omniscience, Sanctity

tity and Justice, (which are inseparable from the true notion of God) that make the obdurate sinner hate the light of his presence, and strive to hide or obscure the Deity in a cloud of doubts, in order to pursue his own criminal career with less remorse. But to conceive the proper notion of God, we must admit, and diligently consider, the divine Attributes.

What do you mean by the Divine Attributes?

By the divine Attributes we mean, the perfections of the Deity: Self-existence, Eternity, Immutability, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Justice, Mercy, Providence, and the like. These, in reality, are not distinguished from the divine essence: but the Holy Ghost, revealing them to us, accommodates himself to our capacity, by representing them as distinct qualities. For as God himself is to us: "Verily—a hidden God:" II. xlv. so the true nature and energy of his attributes must, to us creatures, be incomprehensible.

The divine attributes are all *infinite*; and consequently above our comprehension. For as God himself is known to us by his effects only; so are his attributes. To human reason the

the attributes are also truly mysteries. For a mystery is: A revealed truth, impenetrable (though never contradictory) to human reason.

If we cannot comprehend, or define, the divine attributes; how can we be sure of their existence?

As we are sure of the existence of God, by his effects; though we cannot comprehend, define or explain his Being: so we are sure that all perfection is justly attributed to him; though we cannot clearly discern *how* the diversity of perfections exists in him.

Whatever order also or perfection we discover in the visible creation, the same refers us to his divine power, wisdom and providence: for, "The invisible things of him (*his invisible properties or attributes*) from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: his eternal power also and divinity." Rom. i. 20.

Certainly, no one can bestow what he does not possess: yet we have received *from our Creator* an idea of *Justice, Bounty, &c.* It is therefore clear that he must possess their source.

"You fools, be wise at last. He that planted

C

"the

" the ear, shall he not hear? Or he that formed
 " the eye, doth he not consider:" *or see.*
 Ps. xciii.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGION.

WHAT is Religion?

Religion is the only true worship of the only true God. By revealing Religion, God has condescended to man, in order that man might ascend to God. By Religion we enter into a society with all the blessed; and a sacred commerce is instituted between the Creator and his creatures.

How do you prove the necessity of Religion?

To all who are guided by right reason, and admit the existence of the true God, nothing can be more demonstrative than this proof: Our Creator has given us faculties by which we are capable of knowing, adoring and loving him; we are, *therefore*, to show our gratitude by adoring and loving our Creator; and by learning

ing

ing and obeying his will, that is, his law. This, gratitude requires: This, our very creation demands. "For all (*things*) are yours, and you "are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

To establish the necessity of Religion, is it not also necessary to demonstrate the immortality of the soul?

Not at all. Even in the groundless and false supposition, that the soul were not, by its natural condition, immortal; it would still be equally true: that creatures able to know and love their Creator, are obliged so to do; and consequently must admit Religion.

Why then have both Philosophers and Divines published treatises on the Immortality of the soul?

Because, "Man when he was in honour did "not understand; he hath been compared (*by* "*himself*) to senseless beasts, and made like to "them." Ps. xlviii. v. 21. When the imaginations of some men are so vitiated, as to almost brutalize their reason; it becomes necessary to prove to them, that they are ranked essentially

above the brute creation, and designed for immortality. Our purpose however being, to survey the principles of the true Religion; not, all the devious paths by which presumptuous reason may go astray: we shall not pursue all the learned and subtle disputes, on the animating principle of brutes, and the *natural or essential* immortality of the human soul; but only appeal to the conscious power, and spirituality of the latter. For we mean, in general, to show that our principles are evidenced, either by certain facts, or clear revelation.

The soul is, from internal sentiment and consciousness of thought, convinced of her own individual existence. She is naturally delighted with the ideas of truth and virtue, and with the growing hope of immortality: but is averse from falsehood, vice and destruction. She is therefore created a candidate for immortality. For the natural tendency of every creature, refers to the original intention of the Creator.

Thought, reflection, and the whole rational faculty can not proceed from matter; which is merely inert and passive. If therefore we reflect, we must be convinced that our mind or intelligence is something far above matter.

Even

Even though it be granted that the Almighty could annihilate a soul otherwise immortal; yet the Resurrection of our Saviour, and the other invincible evidences of the truth of our faith, render us secure of our immortality.

We beg leave to supersede other numerous proofs, which might appear too metaphysical for the generality of our readers. And such as have pretensions to philosophy, we refer to Plato, Cicero, &c. among the ancients; to all the greatest modern philosophers; and in fine, to the perpetual and universal sentiment of mankind.

, Do not certain Philosophers still question the immortality of the soul?

There are such. But who shall be able to convince some men, who presume to contradict the whole world, and even themselves; and who rush alternately into the opposite extremes of error? If, for instance, you are asserting the superior dignity of the rational soul, they will contend that there is no essential distinction between the souls of men, and the vital principle of beasts. If, on the other hand, you are endeavouring to establish the insufficiency of reason, in relation to the divine mysteries; they

will then extol and exaggerate the inalienable rights and prerogatives of the same rational soul. Thus these *Proteuses*, to-day suspect themselves to be no better than eventually polished, or self-cultivated beasts: to-morrow, they are as proud as Lucifer of their almighty faculty of reasoning.

As Pascal, then, esteemed nothing more worthy of admiration, than a Christian at the holy communion-table; "Who, so free from elation, believes himself united with God; and yet, so free from dejection, equals himself to the worms of the earth:" so we may, on the reverse, be astonished at the conduct of these irreligious philosophers; who being admitted to a participation of the divine light, are so elated with the gift, as to cite the giver to the tribunal of their reason; and who are yet so abject, as to equal their condition to that of irrational animals. In short, the same serpent that suggested formerly: "You shall be as Gods:" Gen. iii. seems to suggest to these materialists: You are no better than brutes.

What have the materialists to object against the immortality of the soul?

Their most material objections are from dogs, monkeys, and the whole brute kind. Brute
beasts,

beasts, say they, live and die as well as we. This, as the rest, is not their discovery; but a trite objection. A more wise philosopher than such as we now see, puts this very objection to himself, and solves it: Eccles. iii. v. 16, 17. seeing sin and iniquity prevailing with impunity, he infers the necessity of a general judgment, to render to each creature according to its deserts. Then, v. 18, 19, he adds: "that God would *prove* them (*men*)—therefore " (*for that proof or trial*) the death of man " and of beasts is one." The brute creation, therefore, was designed by the Creator as a trial of our faith.

We discern, nevertheless, that man is sufficiently distinguished from beast. The rational faculty has hitherto sufficed, and to spiritual men ever will suffice, to characterize and discriminate the sole animal created to be the image and representation of God on earth.

Besides, he moves with head erect to heaven: he judges the irrational creation, but is judged by no part of it: his progress in art or science is dependent on his own free exertion. He manifests his reason by speech. This also is a peculiar privilege, and analogous to human reason: for as to think, is to speak internally; so
to

to speak, is to think externally. Thus these two faculties are most strictly allied. What were reason without expression; or expression without reason?

And though the nature of some brutes be so subtle, as to serve to try our faith; yet here also providence is discernible: for whereas certain feathered animals are mechanically taught to speak; still beasts, some of which approach nearly to a resemblance of the human form, are never able to learn the least imitation of speech. Had the Ourang-Outang been capable of even imitating human speech, which of us would not have been shocked, to hear articulate words proceeding from such an encroaching shape? If the Creator had not, in this instance, consulted our weakness; which of our modern philosophers (who hardly conceive the seeming unconcernedness of Balaam, at the speech of his own ass) would have been proof against the prodigious shock?

Other materialists, on the contrary; seeing it impossible to raise the nature of beasts to an equality with even the lowest known degree of intellectual beings; fallly forth in quest of savages, whom they wish to degrade to an equality with the highest degrees of subtle instinct. But
hitherto;

hitherto; all Noah's descendants having retained some degree of common sense, and even some wrecks of the original religion; they have not discovered *the desired race* of moped human beings.

Thus the objections raised against the immortality of the soul are altogether futile. And since the universal voice of mankind serves to confirm both a future state of immortality, and the necessity of a religion: it only remains, to expose the insufficiency of natural Religion, and finally to examine the pretensions of mere Reason relative to religious matters.

NATURAL RELIGION.

Is not that religion sufficient, which mere reason might discover from the nature of things?

No. Reason itself, we own, must see the propriety of rendering grateful worship to the Creator; and consequently the necessity of religion, in general; but it could never determine the precise or proper form of worship, due to the Creator. Accordingly, from the very origin of revelation, reason was to be subordinate to the divine authority, in whatever points

were

were then revealed. And after Adam's transgression (too visible, to this day, in its effects) revelation was specially necessary, to guide *corrupted* reason, which has never yet been able to produce a plausible, or even a tolerable system of natural religion; since it has been either exposed to endless errors; or, having attained to some obvious truths, as that of an omnipresent providence, it has detained them captive, without proceeding to their important and necessary consequences. And on this score, St. Paul charges the pagan philosophers, without exception, with inexcusable failure: "Because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified him as God, or given thanks." Rom. i. v. 21.

Nay, what the very best of them have written, concerning the divine nature, and the duties of religion, is a clear evidence of the insufficiency of human reason in point of religion. Certainly the true notion of God, and of the correspondent duty of man, to love him above all, &c. constitute the substance of all religion. Now it is also most certain, that the usual notions which those philosophers had of God, were gross and capricious, formed according to the wild course of their imaginations; and that their ideas of
the

the duty of man, corresponded to such false notions. What pagan philosopher ever taught men to despise themselves; to love their enemies; to be chaste in body and mind? Yet the observance of humility, charity and chastity, is essential even to natural religion. Of the moral fabric, humility must be the foundation, charity the superstruction, and chastity the decent ornament and beauty.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that when we discover, in the pagan authors, any moral passage so excellent as even to approach to the true notion of God, or of human duty; we are, we know not whence, agreeably surprised and charmed with the *unexpected* discovery: whereas, in the lecture of the divine scriptures, just the reverse is felt: For truth and excellence are here so obviously evident, that if the least expression or metaphor, apparently improper, occurs: this alone is apt to strike our attention. In each instance, it is the unexpected occurrence only that strikes us. For the approaches to truth are not less rare in the former instance, than apparent impropriety is in the latter. "The wicked have told me fables: but not as thy law." Ps. cxviii. v. 35.

Is it not therefore preposterous, in those moderns who style themselves philosophers, to be perpetually recurring and referring to the religious gleanings of pagan writers, rather than to the rich Christian harvest? It is to abandon a civilized state, for acorns, huts and hides. They have rejected the sublime truths of revelation, by which alone they might have excelled the most renowned pagan writers; and in all other respects, their productions, how elaborate so ever, are still by far inferior to those of the ancients.

Was mankind, in fact, ever left to the guidance of natural religion alone?

Natural religion, or religion attainable by human reason, without divine revelation, is an imaginary object, which in fact never existed. No people was ever found even pretending to follow a merely natural religion. None of the descendants of Adam were ever seen, who did not retain some remnants, or at least some corruptions of the original and revealed religion. They all participated, more or less, of the all-pervading light of revelation. The Sun of Justice extends his beams to every man who cometh into this world: all receive of his plenitude: none can hide themselves from his influence.

Religious

Religious duties, beyond what reason was able to dictate, were revealed to the first man: as, the sanctification of the sabbath, and abstinence from a certain fruit, even under pain of death. And though death itself must, at that time, have been inconceivable to Adam; yet his transgression of the positive precept was followed by the incredible events which had been sufficiently revealed to him.

And, after the original transgression, the future Redeemer was revealed, as likewise the typical and mysterious rite of sacrificing; which was practised from the beginning, though it is what reason alone could never have prescribed.

Nay even when the Supreme Reason, having moulded Adam's earthly frame, communicated to it a living and rational soul, as a participation of the divine light; his own terrestrial shape, endowed with life, reason and consciousness, must have been considered by the Protoplast as a sufficient evidence of the incomprehensibility of the divine operations.

The visible creation itself, on the whole, especially before the origin of sin, might be regarded as a code of revelation. For the power, wisdom and bounty of the Creator were impressed, in legible characters, on the whole recent crea-

D

tion.

tion. Hence Adam was enabled, without astonishment or perturbation, to listen to the voice of his Creator. And though Eve was produced during Adam's sleep; yet not only her miraculous formation, but also the whole nature, indissoluble bond and mystical import of matrimony were *revealed* to him. So that, as our Saviour himself assures us (Matt. xix. v. 4, 5.) God was the author of those inspired words prophetically pronounced by Adam. Gen. ii. v. 24. "A man shall leave father and mother," &c.

After the deluge, again, with relation to the variety of counterfeit religions among the pagans, as all nations sprang from Noah, so it appears from their universal customs, of offering victims, &c. &c. that their religious rites were but corrupt copies of the one, true and original religion. But mankind, as their sins and errors increased, corrupted the original purity of religion, and attempted to consecrate their own imaginations, errors and vices, by mixing them with their religious worship. Hence a chaos of absurdities ensued. In a word, what can be a more striking evidence of that maze of errors, than the necessity of the Creator's promulgating, as a positive law, even to the least bewildered of mankind: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God?"

To

To judge of the insufficiency of natural religion, from facts; whence generally the best kind of evidence is derived; was not the whole world, except Judæa, turned into a temple of abominable idols, before the Desired of all nations came, to extend the light of revelation to the Gentiles also? What Gods! What homage! Religion would wish to draw a veil over all those abominations, did not the ingratitude of modern infidels compel her to expose them.

Such was the produce of *unenlightened* reason; even after it had brought the polite arts to such inimitable perfection. The fact is too well known. See Bossuet's Disc. on Univ. Hist. Shall then a few superficial philosophers, in the eighteenth century, attempt to supersede revelation, by preposterously boasting the sufficiency of human reason?

Were all the pagan philosophers contented with paganism?

No: Socrates, Plato and Cicero, pursuant to the solid principles of right reason, perceived the want of revelation. They discovered the effects of original sin, though unable to discern the cause. They observed that man, being alternately swayed by two opposite laws, was un-

accountably in perpetual contradiction with himself, "Aliudque cupido—Mens aliud sua—det." Ovid's Met. b. 7. For this reason, the same man seemed actuated by the opposite impulse, now of a good, and now of an evil principle. And hence the schools of Athens and Rome were lost in endless perplexity, from the renowned question: Πῶθεν κακόν; or, *Unde malum?* Whence is evil? Had a Christian child appeared before those heathen sages, to inform them of Adam's fall, and of the whole procedure which alone declares the true origin of sin, and points out its only remedy ("An enemy hath done this." Matt. xiii. v. 28. Yet, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." 1 Cor. c. xv. v. 22.); how they would have rejoiced at the discovery of the true origin of evil, hidden from them, yet revealed to little ones!

A certain class of Moderns pretend, forsooth, to oppose this *essential* point of Christianity. But it is visible to all, except perhaps themselves, that they are not Socrateses, Platos, or Ciceros.

Divine providence, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas observe deferred the coming of our Saviour, till about the end of the fourth millenary, that the world might be sufficiently convinced of

of its miserable want of the divine aid, and might with a loud voice petition for its Redeemer. And we, consequently, see that some greater, more solid and more sincere philosophers than these modern ones, though educated in heathenism, being alarmed on beholding the most ignominious vices converted into acts of worship, and prescribed by grave lawgivers, to do honour to an absurd race of monstrous, fickle and passionate Gods and Goddesses; detested those desperate errors of bewildered reason. Nay, if we may believe their own evidence, they ardently wished for that true light, by which they might see the native and genuine form of virtue and truth. That is, seeing the most glaring absurdities become so universal and inveterate, as to be *humanly* incorrigible: they inferred the want of a divine author of revelation. Whereas some ungrateful and inexcusable Christians now strive to oppose him, by dissembling the loss of original justice, and exaggerating the inviolable immunity and independence of human reason.

Modern philosophers, it may be objected, disclaim the absurdities of paganism?

In many points, they do. But for this exemption they stand indebted to religion. She has shed her divine influence on their *once Christian* minds: and they see by that light which they ungratefully calumniate. Each of them might apply to himself the sentence of Solomon: "This Wisdom went before me, and I "knew not that she was the mother of them "all:" that is, of all my valuable acquisitions. Wisdom vii. v. 12. Either divine Wisdom (the second Divine Person), or Religion, injured as they are by some of their offspring (who under the cloak of philosophy rebel against them) might justly upbraid them: "I have brought "up children, and exalted them: but they have "despised me." Is. i. "Wo to you that are "wise (*philosophers*) in your own eyes." *Idem*, c. v. Be not, however, fondly persuaded that by professing to follow reason, you pass for men truly reasonable: nor that by naming your irreligious profession, The religion of *honest men*; the world implicitly believes you such: nor, in short, that by wildly declaiming against the divine mysteries, you shall ever so dazzle right reason, as to prevent it from discovering even *hyper-mystical* inconsistency in all your philosophic systems of religion. For these, after all the
advantage

advantage of lights borrowed from revelation, are scarcely less absurd than those coined by heathen philosophy.

From the experience therefore of all ages, we conclude that there must be a religion: and that, to prescribe the true religion, which comprises the proper worship of God and the proper conduct of man, belongs to God alone.

C H A P T E R III.

REASON SUBSERVIENT TO RELIGION.

WHAT is human Reason?

Human Reason is: A discursive faculty, limited and subordinate, communicated to man by the supreme Intelligence. By this faculty, man is rendered an image of God; is ranked above the material creation; is enabled to judge of the sensible objects, created for his use; and to discern the will of his invisible Creator, sometimes from the very nature of things, but especially from the evidences of revelation.

Can Reason comprehend the whole nature and properties of all visible things?

By

By no means. Our natural faculties suffice indeed to guide us, as to the *use* of natural things; but not, to discover their true and intimate *nature*, substance, or essence. We see the mere outside of nature: and whenever we attempt to penetrate further, the rest is all mystery.

Repeated experiments have served to bring within view some distant, or hidden objects. But such experimental discoveries tend rather to aggravate the difficulty of complete knowledge, by producing new objects of inquiry, than to explain the whole nature and capacity of visible things, or the whole reason and cause of sensible effects. What philosopher has demonstrated the true origin and entire nature of motion, light, growth, pleasure, pain, life, thought and the like natural objects?

The peasant sees that visible objects exist; he can apply them prudently to their destined use; he thanks God, who gives the beneficent increase of his crop even while he himself is asleep: and the philosopher understands little more of such objects; for he is unable to comprehend their cause and manner of existing, or of producing various effects.

And as to remote objects, which of the successive systems of astronomy has been hitherto brought

brought to a satisfactory demonstration? Proud man! The minutest atom, or a grain of sand, is above the sphere of thy intelligence; yet thou wouldst fain measure heaven and comprehend all nature: Nay, finding thyself inadequate to the vain attempt, thou proceedest rather to doubt even of thy own existence, than to own faculties limited and insufficient:

When knowledge is subordinate to faith, it may be highly conducive to the understanding of divine things: for reason *itself* is generally found right; whenever we make the right use of it. "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself." Eccl. iii. v. 20. But on the contrary, a philosopher accustomed to pierce, by dint of genius, through a few natural obscurities impervious to the vulgar, and to lord it over nature; is apt to rush on presumptuously, and attempts to *dogmatize* concerning the revealed religion. And here (humility being far more important than all the boasted penetration of a modern *Gnostic*, or *enlightened philosopher*) he is too often rather encumbered than assisted by his philosophic discoveries. Because by these he is apt to become too presumptuous to stoop to that low entrance which opens to *the kingdom of heaven*; and which admits those only, who become

become humble, simple, little, diffident and docile, as infants.

Ought the Philosopher to proceed to decide on faith?

The range of nature is abundantly sufficient for the philosopher's excursions. Let him then rather abide by his *Light, Human Understanding, Fixed Air*, and the like: For if he should enter the Church in quality of a Critic; he is, with all his philosophy, in danger of exposing himself to the derision of every young Divine: as he who pretended to harangue Hannibal on the art of war, or the cobbler who criticised Apelles.

“ Search not into things above thy ability——
 “ it is not necessary for thee *to see with thy eyes*
 “ those things that are hid.” Eccl. iii. “ Thy
 “ knowledge, this hath deceived thee.” Is. xlvii.
 v. 10. “ The sensual man perceiveth not the
 “ things that are of the spirit of God.” 1 Cor.
 c. ii. v. 14. “ And I understood that man can
 “ find no reason of all those works of God,
 “ that are done under the sun: and the more
 “ he shall labour to seek, so much the less shall
 “ he find: yea, though the wiseman should say,
 “ that he knoweth *it*, he shall not be able to
 “ find *it*.” Eccl. viii. v. 17.

The

The same God who is Author of nature, is also Author of grace and faith. Has he not therefore left his whole visible creation an inexplicable problem to man, on purpose to render him docile, and to teach him the elements of faith, even from this conviction of his own natural insufficiency?

Since the divine attributes infinitely exceed the limits of human reason, are not all the mysteries of faith consequently incomprehensible?

Undoubtedly. For as Self-existence, Immutability, Spirituality, Creative faculty, Justice and Mercy co-existent and (in the divine essence) undistinguished, and the other infinite attributes of the Deity, are all above the sphere of human intelligence: so are the mysteries; all referring to his infinite nature, or to his divine attribute of Omnipotence; essentially incomprehensible to our reason.

Thus, for instance, as I am fully convinced that God must be eternally self-existent; though I can by no means comprehend *how* he can possibly be so: in like manner I am convinced that the operations of the same eternally self-existent Deity must be proportional and homogeneous

geneal to his nature: though I can not comprehend *how* each mystery is produced by Omnipotence. Hence it clearly follows, that when the Almighty has sufficiently revealed a mystery, relative to his nature or power, we must submit our reason to his authority. And, as he can do more than we can comprehend, we must believe beyond what we can conceive. Our inquiry therefore must be, not into the mystery itself, but only into the evidence of its revelation.

But is not faith itself a rational assent?

It is, originally and virtually, so. Because when sufficient evidences have proved that God has revealed any mystery, nothing can be more *rational* than to believe it. But to suppose faith the mere and commensurate produce of reason, is to exclude all faith. Assured of any fact, by credible authority, *we* believe: but if convinced and sure of it, from our reason; can we properly say, *we believe it*?

As the flight of an arrow is originally from the elastic motion of the bow; though this motion ceases, while the arrow, according to its first direction, continues to proceed: so reason operates in the origin of faith, by attending and assenting to the evidences; though it is unable
to

to accompany that sublime virtue through her whole course. For faith soars even to the throne of God, communicates with the eternal origin of truth, and is admitted to a discovery of the *infinite* Deity and his *incomprehensible* mysteries.

That faith is, in this light only a *rational* assent; may be thus evinced: Reason (confirmed by revelation) directs me to believe that God is self-existent; for he can not be otherwise. This then I must believe; though the faith by which I assent, and as it were ascend to the infinite height of the mystery of self-existence, is no farther *positively* supported by reason; since the object is inconceivable. Again, every reasonable man must own, that his will is free; that he can think, speak, act; or not, as he chooses: and at the same time, he is also convinced, that God must foresee all future events, not excepting those that depend on our free will. But *how* our liberty can be compatible with divine and infallible prescience, is what reason has hitherto never been able to conceive. Reason therefore necessarily refers us to faith: and on this account, only, faith is a rational assent.

Is it not then most just and right, to submit

E

our

our reasoning powers; after sufficient evidence; to the belief of what is above our comprehension?

It is. For as our senses, to avoid frequent deceptions, must be subjected to reason; so reason, with respect to revealed mysteries, ought to submit to faith, or divine authority sufficiently evidenced. Reason is the benevolent handmaid of faith. She is to guide us, attentively and cautiously to the true temple of faith; and then, having admonished us, that the infallible oracle of eternal Truth is there: "Hear ye him: Mark ix. she is to cease, and remain in respectful silence. For we enter the temple of faith, not to judge, but to be judged. Nor is any act of our reason more honourable and rational, than that by which she submits to divine revelation.

Behold a specimen of rational homage paid to the divine authority, by an eminent votary: with respect to the mystery of grace and predestination: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways?" Rom. xi. v. 33. Abraham likewise, the father and pattern of the faithful,

faithful, "against hope believed in hope." Rom. iv. v. 18. For, contrary to all human appearance, he both believed the promised birth of Isaac; and that, if he had effectually immolated him, God was still able to raise the slain victim to life, and would infallibly realize his promise of a numerous race to descend from Isaac.

We may indeed before we enter this temple of divine truth, and by the light of reason alone, survey its pillars, its chief corner-stone, its fundamental rock, and the hand of the Almighty protecting the whole fabric; all which surely promise safety to those who enter. But, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it." Mark x. v. 15. If then we hope to enter this sanctuary, we must imitate the humble diffidence, docility and modesty of disciples; who relying on their teachers, receive the elements of speech; and without asking *why a is a*, or *how b came to be*; simply and implicitly believe, what proper authority recommends. Yet when they have made sufficient progress, they see and admire the whole combination: and useful science is the fruit of their docility.

E 2

Thus,

Thus, having sufficient motives and divine authority, we must humbly submit our reason, that is, our most sublime faculty, and the most noble present of our Creator, to the authority of him who gave it. The unbeliever shall still remain wavering and veering from doubt to doubt: but docile and humble faith leads to satisfactory knowledge here, and to beatific vision hereafter. For, with a view to this docile faith, without the eviſion of ſenſible miracles, our Saviour ſaid: "Because thou haſt ſeen me, " Thomas, thou haſt believed: Bleſſed are they " who *have not ſeen*, and (*yet*) have believed." John xx. v. 29. And conſequently he required faith, as a condition previous to moſt of his miraculous favours. Thus: " If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth." Mark ix. v. 22.

It is, on the whole, a leſs degree of merit, to believe only after ſeeing a miracle: and it is a greater, to believe without having yet ſeen any. This diſtinction is implied in our Saviour's words: "Though you will not believe me, believe the works." John x. v. 38. For his ſupendous works might be ſtyled a kind of moral compulſion: as were alſo the miracles of his Apoſtles, by which they were ordered to *compel* the

the Gentiles; "to come in," to enter the Church. Luke xiv. v. 23. Those therefore of the Jews who believed in Christ, even before *they had seen* his miracles; either relied on his evident character, of dignity, authority and veracity; or (as we now do) on his miracles ascertained by sufficient evidences. In every case, however, the evidence were insufficient, of itself, to produce complete faith, without a meritorious co-operation with divine grace, which illustrates the intellect, and moves the will to assent with full and divine faith.

How far is rational inquiry allowable, with relation to the objects of faith?

The rule is general, and is clearly this: Reason, as far as its light extends and is able to produce certain evidence, is a sure guide; but must never encroach on the confines of *Infinity*. For as faith is not contradictory to our reason; but above it, or beyond its natural horizon and limited view: so reason and faith have each a distinct office. The Supreme Wisdom left the material world, not religion, to the disputes of men.

The office or duty of reason is, to examine all such historical facts, or evidences, as serve to

establish faith; and to estimate their respective weight and influence. Do these prove the existence of revelation? Hath God, therefore, spoken? Are the evidences, or motives of faith, sufficient to excite us to believe? Have miracles been performed, to prove that the Prophets and Apostles were divinely inspired, that Christ is risen, &c? For, "as men speak by words, so the divine power speaketh also by (*miraculous*) facts." St. Aug. ep. 102. And the supreme Truth: "Though you will not believe me, believe the works." John x. So far rational examination may be exerted and extended: nay so far, in case of either culpable or inculpable doubt, reason even *ought* to investigate; in order not only, by co-operating with grace, to extricate itself; but also to enable us, "to satisfy every one that asketh us a reason" &c. Tit. i. It is, in a word, the province of human reason: To examine the evidences. For these serve (as the prophetic sign, of which hereafter) to certify that the mysteries have been revealed.

The duty of faith, on the other hand, is: To believe from divine authority, wherever this is sufficiently evidenced, all revealed truths how impervious soever to reason. Suppose, for instance, a man sufficiently convinced of the truth
of

of revelation. God, he owns, hath spoken: he admits this fact: his faith is therefore challenged. In this case; though the mystery, which God has revealed, be incomprehensible; he must not doubt of its existence. For God is the Truth; and whatever he says, is true. Though his nature, and, as proceeding from *infinite* power, his productions also exceed the capacity of *finite* intelligence. We can not indeed see *how* the revealed mystery is possible, even to Omnipotence. But neither do we see any contradiction to prove it impossible. Nay we might more easily demonstrate its possibility, than the infidel its impossibility. "Because no word (*i. e. thing*) shall be impossible with God." Luke i. v. 37. "With God all things are possible." Matt. xix. v. 26. Or, as it is well expressed by Tertullian, B. On the flesh of Christ: "With God nothing is impossible, but what he willeth not." Render therefore to reason that which is reason's; and to faith that which is faith's.

The revelation of all the mysteries of faith is sufficiently evidenced by miraculous facts. God hath therefore spoken: and we must believe his words. Whenever a fact is sufficiently evidenced: though reason may try, by analyzing,

to trace its original cause, and also its import; yet, if she finds this impracticable, is she therefore to disbelieve the known *fact*? Do we not rather infer possibility from fact? What is done, was possible. Thus, for instance, as miracles have been evidently done, so they are certainly possible. In like manner: God must, in fact, be infinite; yet, if he is so, how can any thing else exist beside (or not essentially comprised in) *his infinite Being*? Nevertheless creatures do, in fact and truth, exist: Creation therefore (the great, leading and unaccountable mystery) is not only possible, but is an undeniable fact. Reason then, wherever evidential facts and infallible authority prove the existence of a divine mystery, must acquiesce in the belief of what is incomprehensible.

What are we chiefly to avoid, in reviewing and studying the divine mysteries?

Presumption. We must be ever conscious of our own insufficiency with respect to divine things. For weakness, when accompanied with presumption, is sure to fall into error and incredulity. "To this purpose:" Jesus said: "I am come into this world; that they who see not, may see; and that they who see, (i. e. *who* thinking

" *thinking themselves more sharp-sighted than the*
" *rest, presume on their own science*) may become
" blind." John ix. v. 39.

But when reason, prudently and modestly
surrendering herself, sacrifices to faith her other-
wise rightful pretensions; the very oblation is
reasonable: " A rational service," or *homage*.
Rom. xii. For as we are unable to fix our eye
steadfastly on the sun, without being dazzled
and overpowered by excess of light; so we are
unable to scrutinize, with our limited reason,
the infinite energy and operations of the Deity.
Can the eye of an insect comprise the universal
radiation of the sun; or a small shell suffice
wherewith to empty the ocean? Yet in these
instances, some degree of proportion is found:
whereas our intellect bears no proportion with
the Deity. " Thy knowledge is become won-
" derful to me: it is high, and I can not reach
" to it." Ps. cxxxviii. v. 6. Still, that very
psalm contains more useful and truly philosophic
knowledge, than a whole tedious system of mo-
dern philosophy. And another great Prophet
expresses the said disproportion thus: " As the
" heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my
" ways exalted above your ways, and my
" thoughts above your thoughts." Is. lv. v. 9.

No

No wonder then, that the sublime truths of revelation, though exactly conformable to our Creator's supreme Reason, should so far exceed the limits of our reason. This truth is confirmed and decided beyond appeal, since: "Jesus—
 "saith: With men it is impossible (*that a camel should pass through the eye of a needle, &c*);
 "but not with God: for all things are possible
 "with God." Mark x. v. 27.

Is it possible that God should have circumscribed the rational faculty within such narrow limits, with respect to matters of faith?

Those limits are improperly termed narrow, which extend to the confines of infinity. The rational evidences afford *precisely* sufficient light to guide us to faith. In order, however, to view with greater satisfaction the conduct of our Creator; previously to our future investigations of revelation, it may be proper to reflect: That Divine Wisdom, which "reacheth—from end
 "to end (*of the universe*) mightily, and ordereth
 "all things sweetly:" Wisd. viii. constantly preserves an admirable equilibrium or mean, through the whole creation.

We

We discern on every side a temperate mixture of good and evil, unaccountable in every system, except that of the, *one only*, true faith. In this view: The universe displays a mixture of order and confusion: the sun and rain are common to the just and unjust; calms succeed to storms; health to sickness; the rose is surrounded with thorns; and the smiling vale is in imminent danger from the torrent, or the volcano: The just are oppressed, the wicked prosper: yet the just are happy in mind, while the wicked are agitated by passions and remorse. For Divine Wisdom still maintains the equilibrium. The comets regularly pursue their wild excursions: the planets, though scattered through the sky, never impede each other's course: the clouds are suspended in precise equilibrium: the fertility of the earth is visibly proportional, that is, at once sufficient to exclude want, and to excite industry.

In what regards faith especially, and the moral dispensation of providence; Christ, the supreme Wisdom, has preserved the essential mean. Our free will is never so biassed by external incidents as to be tempted above its strength, either to incredulity or any other sin; because an increase of grace prevents this danger,

ger. Yet since this life is a state of probation; our free will and fidelity must be put to the trial. And since man fell by a presumptuous pretension to knowledge; Divine Equity hath ordained an humble submission to faith, as the prime requisite to his justification.

For the trial, therefore, of our faith and fidelity; which was the final cause of this visible creation: The brutes were endued with such a vital principle as seems to resemble the life of man: the prophecies were transmitted, partly, in allegories: our Saviour often spoke in parables: forbade to publish certain miracles: Excluded the scoffers, Mark v. when he raised the daughter of Jairus: refused to produce such signs as might seem to force the wilful incredulity of a *wicked generation* to believe in him: permitted the greater part, even of the Jews, to remain proudly and obstinately incredulous, after his resurrection; diminished the frequency of miracles, in proportion, as the standing miracle, of the establishment and continuation of his Church, became more and more conspicuous: &c. &c.

Thus, not to infringe on free will, faith must, and ever will, remain darksome to all proud infidels; yet sufficiently lightsome to the humble elect.

elect. An emblem of this was seen, in the bright and dark sides of that mystical cloud, by which God guided his former people from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the land of promise.

Faith is, however, *a gift of God*. And we must remember that: "Wisdom will not enter
" into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body sub-
" ject to sins." Wisd. i. v. 4. We need not,
therefore, wonder at the number of modern in-
fidels: not even if their number, as that of fools,
were infinite. For, "These men blaspheme
" whatsoever things *they* know not: and what
" things soever they naturally know, like dumb
" beasts, in (*by*) these they are corrupted." St.
Jude, v. 10. Hence also, the Author of faith,
and Rewarder of humility, even with congratulatory emotion, said to his heavenly Father:
"Thou hast hid these things from the Wise and
" Prudent (*conceitedly so*), and hast revealed
" them to little ones." Matt. xi. v. 25. Such
is the inviolable rule of divine dispensation.
The children of God, the true Israelites, are en-
lightened; while all such, *Egyptians*, as render
themselves "worthy to be deprived of light:"
Wisd. xviii. are involved in gloomy darkness,

F

which

which serves only to discover spectres of horror and despair. The humble alone believe: and true believers are alone exempted from fatal ignorance and horrid darkness.

Let us then, before we venture to proceed to the Sanctuary of Revelation, implore the divine assistance, to purge our hearts from all disorderly passions, and our intellects from presumption: that with hearts raised on high, we may succeed in quest of truth, by the calm, pure, and subordinate light of reason. And, to use the words of an inimitable Author: “ Since, therefore, we
“ are preparing to contemplate the mystery of our
“ Saviour’s nativity,—let us dispel the confused
“ mists of earthly reasonings, and let the gross
“ fumes of worldly wisdom vanish from the en-
“ lightened eye of faith.” St. Leo, the great, Sermon. 7. on the Nativity of our Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

REVELATION.

WHAT is Revelation?

It is the declaration or discovery of religious mysteries, relative to the glory of God and the eternal salvation of man.

This Revelation or manifestation, as has been already evidenced, was necessary to guide mankind, especially after the loss of original justice. It was therefore first communicated to the Patriarchs and Prophets; then published by the mouth of the Son of God himself; and in fine, by his Apostles. It was confirmed by miracles: which, to use a simile, have always succeeded the divine revelations, as the loud voice of thunder succeeds lightning. Thus we remark, that whenever the Son of God had declared the most important truths, he also regularly confirmed and ratified them by miracles.

To pretend to conceive an impossibility, or even a difficulty, in the communication of the Creator with his creatures, by means of revela-

tion,

tion, were a suspicion unworthy both of the Deity and of his rational images. On the contrary, though the revelations were not made immediately to us; it is still, even to us, most honourable, that our Creator has deigned to reveal his will, relative to our good, to his most worthy and chosen ministers, who were our fellow creatures.

Do the existence of God, the known condition of man and the natural duty of religion point to Revelation?

Yes. For if God is, he is just: if just, he rewards each one according to his works: here he does not; because the just are often oppressed, and the wicked prosper: he will therefore hereafter. Thus the necessity of a future state, for due rewards and punishments, are, to reason itself, easily discoverable: and this is the Main of Revelation. Were there no providence; were all committed to blind chance and hazard; were there, in a word, no future state of rewards and punishments; or even, had God not revealed these truths, these *words of eternal life*: then the sincere and pious Christian might justly complain of being left, in spite of his most laudable endeavours, unable to arrive at the knowledge

ledge of his Creator's will, or of the homage due to him. Shall a just God, might he say, see me suffer so much for his sake, or for fear of offending him, and not deign to undeceive me? Even man abhors the cruelty of such conduct. "Then have I in vain justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent, And I have been scourged all the day." Pl. lxxii.

But admit the truths of revealed Religion; enter this divine sanctuary; *understand the last things* of the good and the wicked; consider that balance of eternal equity (seen by Balthasar, Dan. v.) which determines the merits of all men: and you will find God as just to Lazarus, as to the rich Glutton; to the oppressed, as to the oppressor; rewarding even for a cup of cold water, and calling to account for an idle word. Thus then, the existence of God imports his attributes; these point directly to religion; and religion, to that revelation upon which our faith is grounded. We reason thus: God is: he has created us able to know and love him: we must then infer the necessity of Religion. Now, as our finite reason is unable to determine the precise and proper form of religion due to God (for, in fact, it has never produced any but absurd systems, not of natural, but unnatural religion)

ligion) Revelation is therefore necessary, to point out the definite and true religion, which alone is agreeable to God.

Finally, the Christian Religion, derived from divine Revelation, is alone found to be worthy of God: it, therefore, has a peculiar right to our preference; even from its intrinsical and absolute excellence.

Is not a *rational*, plausible, or moral life, even without the belief of any revealed mystery, sufficient to salvation?

By no means. Reason itself sees the vanity of this phantom, intitled, *The religion of honest men*. For, having sufficient evidence of a divine Revelation, we are at least equally obliged to submit our intellect to the revealed truths, as our will to the moral law. In the Gospel, the first requisite insisted upon by our Saviour, is, faith in him. For: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. v. 6. Because God having deigned to reveal such important truths, as were before unknown to men; whatever has been revealed can not be to us indifferent. As several stars; formerly unknown, because invifible to the naked eye; being, by means

means of the telescope, now discovered, become essential to the astronomical system. For what the telescope is to the eye, that revelation is to the intellect.

Nay the intellect being our most noble faculty, it is our prime and chief obligation to do homage to our Creator's supreme Intelligence, by submitting this faculty to his authority: Hence St. Paul, in his epistles, regularly treats of the doctrinal points of faith, in the first place; and then proceeds, in order, to deduce and enforce the moral duties.

It were vain to pretend, that the final sentence shall condemn only the omission [of charitable works; seeing that our Judge declares also: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mark xvi. v. 16. Nay: "He that doth not believe, is already judged." John iii. v. 18. For: "Some mens sins are manifest, going before *them* to judgment." 1 Tim. c. v. v. 24. In a word, the obligations both of faith and of morality are a natural consequence of divine revelation: for the will of God, revealed to man, becomes his law. But, when Luther, the leader of modern free-thinkers, attributed salvation to faith only; these, running to the opposite extreme, deem faith immaterial.

This

This objection, how trivial soever, is too apt to impose on some ill-instructed Christians; especially such as are situated amidst an amazing diversity of dissenting and opposite systems of faith. But it were preposterous, from the casual currency of false coin, either to infer the inutility, or to doubt of the existence of that true coin, which, did it not exist as the original, could never be mimicked by any possible counterfeiction.

A summary view of the gradual progress of Revelation.

In the beginning of time, God created the world, by his eternal Word. By him he drew the plan of this beautiful universe, as it were *at one stroke*. This magnificent fabric, just when he chose it, became visible, or existed, by his omnipotent *fiat*. God spoke the Word, and obsequious to his Will the whole creation came forth.

When God made Adam, He neither said: *I will* make man; nor ordered his Word: *Make thou* man (which might imply inferiority): but said, in the plural, as implying the B. Trinity, "Let us make man." Part of the Angels
having,

having, through pride, fallen from heaven; afterwards, through envy, tempt and seduce Eve: by whom the first man, Adam, made to the likeness of God, is also seduced. By his fall he is despoiled of his original rectitude. Hence, in Adam, our origin being corrupted; we, his offspring, are conceived in sin (Ps. 50.) and all inherit his degraded condition, the effect of his disloyalty. Hence also we trace the origin of those contradictory laws, of the flesh and of the spirit; which to the Pagans were an unaccountable paradox, and at last led some to imagine two opposite principles. Seeing that, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit against the flesh." Gal. v. v. 17.

Immediately after Adam's fall, a Saviour is promised; his passion is prefigured by the death of innocent Abel, and by the institution of victims. Then, with the propagation of Adam's race, sin is also propagated. The wicked, in fine, are drowned by the deluge: and the whole human race, except those saved with the just Noah in the Ark, perishes. This awful catastrophe, renowned even among the heathens, is by their Poets corruptedly called Deucalion's flood.

MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

After the deluge, the world is renewed. A particular race is chosen, to receive a particular and figurative law. Abraham is called by the true God, to be *the Father of the faithful*, and of the Messiah. Moses soon after is filled with the divine Spirit, and made Lawgiver of God's chosen people. For since the true history and Law of human nature seem, at this period, in danger of being corrupted and obliterated: to obviate this, God raises Moses; who is the first *known* Author, and the Father of true history. By this man of God the people of Israel is prepared to receive the Messiah. The rites and mysterious types, revealed to Moses, continue through every succeeding age, to admonish the Jews of the coming of Christ. Miracles and repeated prophecies prevent them from losing sight of *The desired of all nations*. Whether in the law of nature (vulgarly so called), or in that of Moses; all is performed with reference to the Messiah. All the Patriarchs and Prophets, either were figurative forerunners of him, or foretold his coming. Yet his chosen people rejects him; and the fulness of the Gentiles enter.

The Messiah, or Revelation of the new Law.

Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, from the beginning, intending to establish his Church, and to make her his Spouse; first drew a sort of sketch or outlines of this mystery, in the old law; then coloured those outlines, *with his blood*, and filled and finished the whole in the new law. For, arriving at the *appointed juncture* of time, and being born of a pure Virgin; he accomplishes all the prophecies; commands, at pleasure, all nature; conquers death; ascends to his Father. Then, by twelve poor simple men, he converts the world; dethrones the Demons; confounds and converts the Philosophers; undeifies the Emperors; renders his martyrs invincible; and empowers his preachers and saints to produce, in testimony of his faith, incontestible miracles.

How is the Christian Revelation proved?

Innumerable evidences might be adduced. But especially six irresistible proofs confirm the divine revelation of this doctrine of salvation: The internal evidence of scripture, from the inimitable style and wisdom discoverable in the Gospel

Gospel itself: The perpetual succession of the sacred Ministry, and of the true believers: The accomplishment of the prophecies: The demonstration of miracles: The dispersion of the Jews: And the conversion of the Gentiles. The two last are, in effect, standing and permanent miracles; which were *repeatedly* foretold by our Saviour: and which we all behold.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

What is remarkable in the style of the Evangelists?

"They turned not when they went: but every one went straight forward." Ezech. i. v. 9. In the artless style of all the four Evangelists, we remark an inimitable simplicity of narration. Their style has precisely the characteristics of conscious veracity. They know that what they relate is the truth: they therefore never stop to make the least reflection on what they have already related: no inference: they never look behind them. No circumspection, no proof, no appeal to any evidence or authority.

No mention is made even of such circumstances as, in several instances, might have cleared

cleared up the obscurity or apparent difficulty of certain passages, and have rendered their narrative more credible, or even plausible to all readers.

Nothing is subjoined by the Evangelists, to accommodate the most astonishing facts and supernatural mysteries to the approbation of their readers. Even the miraculous conception of Christ is related, most unconcernedly, without referring to his future miracles for its confirmation.

The Gospel contains no mark of such probable conjecture, doubt, or hesitation; as are natural to all uninspired authors. No sign of admiration, no amplification, not a single word for ornament! No exaggeration: no sign of emotion, nor even of sensibility: no stroke of satire: no trace of partiality, respecting either their *beloved* Lord, or his friends: no remark on the less culpable weakness of Pilate, the more horrible fury of the people, or the consummate malice and hypocrisy of their persecuting leaders. "They crucified him there." Luke xxiii. v. 33. Whom?—Who says this?—No exclamation! No sentiment expressed, where every sensible reader, even at this distance, is so sensibly affected! In the whole Gospel, there is not a word to express the Evangelists opinion of their Lord. No

visible aim at our approbation, either of their Master, or of themselves. No glimpse of self-love: from which, what human author was ever exempt? No shadow of affectation. All is plain fact, simplicity, sincerity and truth.

Such unaffected and disinterested narration, no uninspired author was ever able to frame. Vain were the attempt even to imitate it. But the holy Spirit prevented the Evangelists from adding any ornament of human superstruction on the divine foundation, Jesus Christ: who in life and death, was himself always one, constant and unalterable character; uniform, as the Sun. The same, "yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Heb. xiii. v. 8. This inviolable character, therefore, was to be exhibited, alone, conspicuous, and disencumbered from all human sentiments, how refined soever: and was to be judged of by all, without the gloss of human eloquence, or the addition of even one jot to its native candour and simplicity.

Hence we behold the Evangelical Eagle, soaring up to the eternal generation of the *Word*, and descending to the low vale of his incarnation with the same smooth and equable glide. He mounts to mysteries above the Cherubim;

rubim; and still retains the native, simple and artless style, as it were of an innocent child.

Nay, had the Gospel been the produce of their own genius, and not dictated by the Spirit of God; they certainly would have avoided the mention of such things as must, *naturally*, seem rather to disgrace than to adorn their divine Hero: as, his flight into Egypt, his temptation, his agony, his complaint of being forsaken on the cross, and the like. Or, at least, they would have added a few words to account for such apparent improprieties and inconsistencies. Would they, if ordinary historians, have represented themselves, to the very end of their gospels, as such insensible, stupid and obstinate characters? We might be tempted to despise and even detest them, were we otherwise ignorant of the sudden change afterwards wrought in them by the Holy Ghost. Yet the Evangelists Matthew and John were themselves Apostles.

In fine, the four Evangelists relate the life of their Lord so differently, as to demonstrate that they did not previously concert together: and yet, in the main, so conformably, as to show that they were all guided by one and the same Spirit of Truth.

G. 2. What

What was the personal character, or constant demeanour of Jesus Christ?

In the whole Evangelical history, amidst all his miracles, there never appears the least shadow of elation, ambition, or surprise. The *words of eternal life* flow from his sacred mouth, as the river from its source. He appears every where the same; fully possessing the most sublime truths; familiarly acquainted with all heavenly mysteries; never at a loss; never exposed to the least sudden emotion; calmly and sedately condescending to the meanest capacities; yet with such conscious dignity and majesty, as still to preserve the holy and awful character of his Divine Person: "You have heard that it was said to them of old—But I say to you."—Matt. v. Not, as the Prophets, "Thus saith the Lord:" but: "*I* (the Lord) *say*."—"For I myself that spoke, behold I am here." II. lii. v. 6.

Our Lord is every where found most amiable, equitable, impartial, humane, affable, mild, humble, patient, longanimous, holy, and pure not only from guilt, but even from all possible suspicion: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" John viii. v. 46.

What

What shall we say of his carriage during his sacred passion? Plato, in his elaborate and pænegyric relation of the death of Socrates, describes his hero setting off the justice of his own cause; ostentatious of a magnanimous contempt of this life, yet relying on mere conjectures concerning a future life; and either weakly or scandalously, or both, ordering a cock to be offered to Esculapius. — Christ says nothing. But his whole life loudly proclaims his innocence, and condemns his judges. The bright rays of his divine virtue dart forth on every side, and defy *the power of darkness* to eclipse them. He betrays no glimpse either of presumption, or of weak dejection: neither resistance, nor cringing. He simply and calmly asserts *his* future coming to judgment, and the eternal discrimination of virtue from vice: *not from learned fables*: but from personal and infallible intuition: being himself *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.

If he seems to agonize and be troubled in mind, it is when himself troubles himself: whereas before his mortal judges, the supreme Judge is intrepid, unmoved and sedate. Nay, even there, with a single look of his divine serenity, dispelling darkness and trouble from the mind of Peter, and inspiring him with recollec-

tion and grace; he erects him, and recovers (*thus humbled*) the future *vicarious* foundation of his Church.

Though he never insults his judges by displaying their crying injustice, or defying death: and though he constantly refuses to justify himself; still a certain *something* more than human speaks his innocence, evidences his dignity, staggers Pilate; and had not the certainty of his death depended upon a superior decree or sentence, and on his free acceptance of it for our ransom; more than on the malice and fury of the Jews; Pilate's sentence, in all human appearance, must have been prevented by that air of innocence and majesty, which even to him appeared as the internal evidence of a Divine Person. But, as our Saviour's absolute command over all nature had already proved him to be, *The mighty Arm of Jehovah*, which was revealed to Isaiah; so his omniscient wisdom punctually and perfectly accomplished all the Prophetic oracles. At his death, in a word, as all through life, he is wise, without study; moderate, patient and completely virtuous, without effort.

Such was the Author of the Christian Faith. Wherefore, as St. Justin Martyr observed that the

the Demons mimicked the true prophecies, and by suggesting the fabulous exploits of Bacchus, Hercules, Esculapius, Pallas, &c. all sprung from Jove, attempted to obscure the Prophetic descriptions of the world's Redeemer; while, after all, they were able from so many *heroic Godlings*, to form but a very deficient and disfigured copy of our Saviour's character: so we may, in like manner, observe that the scattered gleanings of wisdom, and flimsy anecdotes of morality; which of late some impotent adversaries, degenerate and diminutive philosophers, have raked up and collected from Zoroaster, Confucius, Plato, and other real or fabulous authors; if compared with that *whole*, coherent and perfect form of wisdom and morality, which Christ *alone* discovers; will appear as the flashy blaze of a comet, compared to the steady and genuine light of the Sun.

In short, whoever reads the Gospel, with due attention, will be convinced of its *divine* excellence. But alas, to the generality, the Gospel itself is a *hidden treasure*, which they pass over without attention sufficient to discover its inestimable value.

Can you instance from the Gospel a few sentences, as internal evidences of our Saviour's divine wisdom?

For instance: "I am the vine, you the branches;" &c. John xv. v. 5. How apposite, here, is the vine! Its wood is the most contemptible; its fruit most precious: its stock hidden, or apparently dead; its propagation quick and extensive.—The absurd superfluity of worldly solicitude is thus exposed: "No man can serve two masters (i. e. can dedicate his life, actions, and especially his intention, to two different ends)—You can not serve God and mammon (riches, or the enjoyments which they serve to procure). Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment? (emphatically indicating, that since God gives the principal, Life and Body; if we sincerely seek his justice, v. 33. we can not doubt of the necessary, food and raiment). Behold the birds—your heavenly Father feedeth them—Which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are

“ are you solicitous? Consider the lilies—they
 “ labour not—yet—not even Solomon in all
 “ his glory was arrayed as one of these.” Matt.
 vi.—To establish the *essential* foundation of
 humility: “ Every one that exalteth himself,
 “ shall be humbled: and he that humbleth him-
 “ self, shall be exalted.” Luke xiv.—When
 he had, *almost imperceptibly*, multiplied the loaves:
 seeing that the Pharisees demanded some strik-
 ing sign from heaven, he takes occasion thence
 to warn us against hypocritical ostentation:
 “ Beware of the *leaven* of the Pharisees.” Mark
 viii. v. 15. The application of this metaphor,
 by which the leaven expresses hypocrisy, is here
 exquisitely exact. Hypocrisy made the Phari-
 sees always strive to appear great in the eyes of
 men; whereas *The Son of man* always aimed at
 appearing little. A Pharisee would have mag-
 nified that prodigious multiplication of the
 loaves, by producing the whole increase at once:
 Christ hides it, by a gradual production; and
 then proposes his example to our imitation:
 that we, rejecting all Pharisaical leaven, may be
 ever found intrinsically greater than our out-
 ward appearance. For as leaven swells the ap-
 pearance, without increasing the substance, of
 bread: so hypocrisy makes great ostentation,
 without

without the substance or foundation of virtue.
 —Assigning the immediate reason of good or evil discourses: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Luke vi. And mounting to the very source of all such diversity of sentiments: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." *Idem*, c. xii. —To discriminate true from false liberty: "Whosoever committeth sin, is the *servant* of sin." John viii. that is: he forfeits his true liberty.
 —For the detection of hypocrites: "By their fruits (*as of trees*) you shall know them." Matt. vii. —To commend that open candour, which is the fruit of conscious rectitude of intention; and to detect sly malice and hidden running: "Every one that doth evil hateth the light." John iii. —To oppose the vanity of our, too ordinary, projects and pursuits: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark viii. —To preclude a fatal suggestion, of which our corrupt nature is very susceptible, and to encourage perseverance: "But if that evil servant shall say in his heart: My Lord is long a coming." &c. Matt. xxiv. v. 48. —To inspire us with confidence in prayer: "If you then *being* evil,—give good gifts to your children,
 "dren,

"dren, how much more will your Father from
"heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask
"him?" Luke xi. &c. &c.

"True it is: Never did any man speak like
"this man." John vii. On a diligent perusal
of the Gospel, for the first time especially, we
are moved to cry out with the devout woman,
Luke xi. "Blessed is the womb that bore thee."
For as our Saviour, at the age of twelve years,
amazed the Doctors in the Temple: so after-
wards, without the support of human literature,
his words were such as have ever since been the
admiration of all who are able to understand
their divine energy.

With regard to his parables, they generally
comprise a triple meaning, prophetic, theologic
and moral: each, if we but hear the Church,
sufficiently intelligible; yet so as not to obscure
each other. Witness, that of the prodigal son;
of the good Samaritan; of the vineyard, &c.
The reprobation of the Jews and the conversion
of the Gentiles are prophesied; the just and
merciful conduct of God is delineated; and the
moral duties of each individual Christian are il-
lustrated. Yet all is said with the greatest ease
and simplicity. Who is so blind as not to dis-
cern in them the language of divine Wisdom,

of

of the Creator adapting his words to the capacity of his creatures? See also the parable of the Sower, of the ten Virgins, the Builders, and the rest.

Let us contemplate also the adorable wisdom of his divine apothegms, or extemporary answers. Many of these, without occasioning the least exasperation, by one mild and gentle intimation, and merely by the native force of the Truth, sufficed to confound his insidious adversaries. By an inimitable and divine energy, by an acumen as imperceptible as it was irresistible, his answers, quickly as lightning, exposed the impotent malice of his enemies, and completely refuted their subtle and intricate questions.

Thus, when his cunning and treacherous opponents; to reduce him to the necessity of either speaking treasonably against Cesar, or unpopularly against the sacred rights and inalienable liberty of God's chosen people; had contrived this seemingly inevitable alternative: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cesar, or not?" He answered: "Show me a *penny* (*a Roman coin, alias called, a denarius*). Whose image and inscription hath it? They answered—"Cesar's. And he—Render therefore to Cesar the things that are Cesar's: and to God
" the

“ the things that are God’s.” Luke xx. Lo! Not only the wily dilemma is dissipated, but the very necessary line of discrimination is drawn at one stroke, sufficient (if ambition was not blind) to determine the rightful limits and preclude the mutual encroachments of Church and State, on each other’s confines: or, at least, to regulate our respective submission, due to both.

In like manner, when the Scribes and Pharisees arraigned the adulteress, pretending to defer to our Saviour’s authority, by that question: “ Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou?” John viii. they thought he could not escape. For if (from his wonted clemency) he acquitted that convict, he must contradict the Mosaic law; and if he passed sentence on her, he would be amenable to the Roman tribunal, as usurping that capital authority of which the Sanhedrim itself was then deprived. When, therefore, they became urgent for his answer: raising his head, he placidly answers: “ He that is without sin among you, let *him* first cast a stone at her. And again “ (*how unconcernedly!*) he stooped down, and “ wrote on the ground.” v. 7, 8. Surely the *finger of God* is as visible here, as it was in Egypt, or on Sinai, Thus is Wisdom herself seen:

H

“ Playing

“ Playing in the world.” Wisdom viii. With what ease was their whole scheme unexpectedly disconcerted ! The sinners fall into their own pit. Astonished, *self-convicted*, and dismayed, one by one, they all depart. Then He (who is alone without sin among men) whose head droops, when urged to condemn ; but is raised, when he is to pardon the contrite ; dismisses the miserable culprit with that benign sentence : “ Go—Sin no more ;” which implies at least conditional absolution. Well might he then say, v. 12. “ I am the light of the world :” since, by his all-pervading rays, he thus searches all hearts, illustrates each conscience, discovers hypocrisy, exposes the works of darkness, and compels those who do evil and hate the light ; who study to hide, not to *confess and forsake* their sins (Prov. xxviii. v. 13.) ; to skulk from his presence.

Again, when they called his authority in question ; he most wisely retorted on the hypocrites, by asking : The baptism of John whence was it ?” Matt. xxi. Had they said : *From heaven* : they must have condemned themselves, since they had not believed the great Baptist. Had they answered : *From men*, or a mere human invention : they must have exposed themselves to the fatal

fatal indignation of the people. They therefore, cautiously answer: "We know not." And (the truth not admitting the obvious and correspondent reply: *Nor do I know—*) he, wisely, subjoins: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." *Ibid.*

Having silenced those wily Scribes and Pharisees, (and also the Sadducees, a sort of Jewish Free-thinkers, Deists or Materialists) Christ humbled their self-conceit, and publicly exposed their insufficiency, by demanding an explanation of those words of David: "The Lord said to *my Lord*, Sit thou &c." That is: God the Father spoke to Christ; who from eternity was David's *Lord* ("God blessed for ever." Rom. i. v. 5.) yet was, in time, about to become his son ("according to the flesh." *Ibid.* being of the Israelites). But that text was to them inexplicable; for, "Who shall declare his generation?" Is. liii. v. 8. Christ, therefore, asked them: "David then calleth him *Lord*: and "how is he his *son*?" Luke xx. See the context of each evangelical text, which has been briefly cited above. See also the "Fondemens de la foi," par M. Aymé: to which *inestimable treatise* many of the above reflections are due. Peruse, in fine, the whole Gospel: itself

Being only a sketch of our Lord's doctrine. On this, if you love the light, you will meditate diligently and leisurely.

No possible exasperation, as you will remark, is ever able to move the Son of God from the mean of truth, to either of the opposite extremes (to which frailty all men are, more or less, liable): but, still unmoved, his approbation or blame is ever exactly commensurate with the boundaries of truth and falsehood, of virtue and vice. His enemies might more feebly attempt to turn the visible sun from his course, than this *Sun of Justice* from his natural orbit of equity.

In fine, the internal evidence discoverable in the Gospel, extorted from J. J. Rousseau these known and remarkable words: "I need no other evidence of the *divinity* of the Gospel, but the sanctity, wisdom, purity and sublimity of its doctrine." Alas, why did he not comprehend that sentence: "Out of thy own mouth I judge thee." Luke xix.?

Since the Son of God was, by his incarnation, likewise the Son of man; was he not also susceptible of the most refined and virtuous sentiments, such as generous friendship, humanity, compassion and the like?

He

He evidently was. His heart was shut to those affections only, which imply imperfection: but was ever open to the rest. He loved St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist (both virgins) Lazarus and his devout sisters, the rich young man who had kept the commandments, Mark x. v. 21. the innocent children, whom he embraced and blessed; in short, all the just, whom he always received with the most affectionate and sensible tenderness. When the multitude was so attentive to his words, as even to neglect their food, his humanity was moved with tender compassion for them. See Mark viii. Nay even great sinners, and such miserable creatures as were either persecuted by the Jews, or abandoned to despair, were the peculiar objects of the humanity and compassion of our Saviour.

When he was going to raise Lazarus, John xi. seeing Mary and her friends weeping, "He groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself, and said: Where have you laid him? They say to him: Lord, come and see. *And Jesus wept.* The Jews therefore said: (*and the remark was just*) Behold how he loved him." Is not this a most emphatic pathos? They said, come and see. No reply. But: *Jesus wept.* To every true lover of Jesus, enough is said.

The space of four days was prerequisite, to prevent all doubt of the miracle. But now, Jesus's affection can brook no needless delay. "He" cried out with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth."—Attend, every sinner, how inveterate and desperate soever thy habit may be: *revive*. The effectual voice of Jesus is to thee also applicable: "Lazarus, come forth."

Peter had thrice denied his Lord. Our Saviour appearing to him, after his resurrection, points out to him the most proper means of atoning for his grievous fault. What means? That God, needing not our service, accepts what is done to his servants, as if done to himself. He therefore, John xxi. thrice interrogates Peter: "Simon *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these." v. 15, 16, 17. Peter twice answers in the affirmative: but with modest diffidence, correcting his former presumption. At last, filled with confusion, nor daring to confide even in his own conscience, on account of his past rashness, he appeals to his Lord's omniscience, v. 17. Jesus, convinced of his love, and satisfied with his humility and diffidence, pathetically subjoins to each affirmative answer: "Feed my lambs—Feed my lambs. v. 15, 16. "Feed my *Sheep*." v. 17. Each word is emphatic.

phatic. Why does he ask: Lovest thou me? Because charity covers a multitude of sins. Why enjoin: Feed my lambs? Because what we do to one of his little ones, he regards as done to himself. Why: Feed my *Sheep* (not lambs only) in the third place? Because Peter had proved himself fit to be pastor of pastors, by finally adding: "*Thou knowest all things.*" which is proper to God alone: as, on a similar occasion, he had formerly confessed him to be: *Christ, the Son of the living God.* In a word, the whole is worthy of the Author of light and charity. See his last exhortation to his flock, with his apostrophes to his Father, from c. xiii. to xviii. of St. John. What bounty and tender love!

When the Centurion, Matt. viii. had professed such faith in our Lord, as to believe him to be, though absent, obeyed more absolutely by all creatures, than he himself, even when present, was by his soldiers and servants; with what congratulatory emotion did the Saviour and Lord of armies, turning to the multitude, applaud him, saying: "Amen I say to you: I have not found so great faith not even in Israel." v. 10.

The Syrophenician a Gentile woman of Canaan, whose daughter was troubled with an evil spirit, applied to Jesus (before whose feet the
devil

devil goes forth. Hab. iii.) and fell at his feet. He at first employs a most humiliating allegory: but it is by way of apology for his refusal. Then her faith and humility prompt her to take in good part the trying words of her beneficent Patron; and continuing *his* allegory; she subjoins: "Yea Lord; for the whelps also eat under the table—And he said to her: *For this saying, go thy way,*" &c. (*all is granted thee*). Mark vii. O that we Gentiles imitated this example! The voice of perseverant humility and faith is so eloquent and powerful in the ears of Jesus, that whoever shall employ "*this saying,*" shall in a manner persuade and direct his wisdom and power.

In like manner, when the leper had said: "Lord, if thou *wilt*, thou *canst* make me clean." Repeating his well chosen terms: "Jesus put forth his hand, and (*above contagion*) touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean." John viii. v. 2, 3.

For an abundance of evident instances of such amiable sentiments, we refer to the whole Gospel. The specimens here produced are only as a few obvious flowers, gathered to excite a desire of viewing the whole garden.

What

What properties characterize the whole doctrine of Christ?

Those of Divine Wisdom graciously condescending to human capacity. "The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench." Is. xlii. v. 3. In this light, before his disciples had received the Holy Ghost, he said to them: "I have many things to say to you: but you can not bear them now." John xvi.

His moral precepts, though divinely prudent, seem so natural and obvious that, reading them, we can scarcely convince ourselves that we knew them not before. We rejoice to find in them that very same light,—"Which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," John i. This light of *The Supreme Reason* penetrates every dark recess of the human mind, illustrates each conscience and exposes every lurking error.

The style of the Author of Salvation is most simple and clear: yet the sublime sense, important truths, expressive emphasis and irresistible energy of his doctrine command the attention and admiration of the greatest geniuses. See *the Lord's prayer*. Let any true Philosopher study

study also *the Sermon on the Mount*, and analyze the eight beatitudes, those axioms of Wisdom incarnate: Matt. v. vi. vii. He will discover an inexhaustible treasure of ethic knowledge, still coming more and more in view. What simplicity of language! What sublimity of thought! What light reflected on the moral system, or the way to the Supreme Good! What a combination of meekness and authority!

In our Saviour, alone, we discern a constant clemency with relation to the sins of infirmity; and due rigour against sins of malice. Does not this correspond with our idea of equity? Just so every good man *wishes* invariably to judge.

The divine wisdom of our Redeemer never applauded mere genius: he always bestowed his approbation on humility, meekness, faith, charity, the prudence of the spirit and every virtuous quality. He promised reward not to the number, but to the good use of the talents received.

In effect, the moral doctrine of Christ is altogether pure, just and pious, beyond the power of human invention. Its severity condemns the passions of men: and yet, by an admirable attraction, it wins their hearts. It points in direct opposition to self-love, the source of every disorder;

disorder; requiring of all its followers: To despise and hate themselves: To love and serve all others; even their enemies: It declares the poor in spirit (who despise riches, pleasures and all vain pursuits, for the kingdom of heaven), the happy and peculiar favourites of God, and entitled to his kingdom. It teaches, on the other hand, that the rich, in spirit or affection, can not enter Heaven. In a word, it pronounces those happy, whom the world for four thousand years had deemed miserable. See Matt. v. vi. vii. This doctrine lays the solid foundation of social happiness: and the Infidel himself would wish that all *his neighbours* effectually followed it.

Infinite prudence and the most wise discretion are remarkable in all our Saviour's instructions.

He generally foretells his passion to his disciples, immediately after having given a miraculous proof of his Divinity; or (as Mark viii.) after their confession of his divine origin: but never without subjoining his resurrection. Whenever he foretells his future sufferings, *to his disciples*, he adds a detail of the concomitant circumstances, lest by his humiliations their faith should be scandalized: but he constantly keeps those particulars veiled and concealed *from* the rest; who were about, unknowingly, to inflict
on

on him whatever had been foretold by the Prophets, concerning his future passion. "For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. c. ii. v. 8. In this view, he likewise forbade his chosen disciples to publish his Transfiguration, till he should be risen from the dead.

But of innumerable instances, the divine discretion of the Christian Legislator is discoverable from this: Seeing that the depravity of human nature, since Adam's fall, usually proceeds from sensuality: he employs *urgent* counsel, to make us bear our crosses and abstain from sensual pleasures: then his own example, with the promise of an ample recompense, are sufficient inducements to whoever shall embrace voluntary poverty and perpetual chastity, in order to propagate his kingdom. "As the eagle enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them." Deut. xxx. But to preclude excess, he employs the authority of his precept, as: "Take heed—lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life." Luke xxi. v. 34.

Such doctrine, in fine, from such authority, must prove altogether irresistible. Hence, this incredible revolution ensued: He established every

every true virtue, in spite of *universal* prejudice; and abolished every false notion of virtue in spite of *universal* approbation and prescription. In short, the fact is evident: He reformed the world. For, by the light of his Gospel, superseding and exploding that corrupt, absurd, monstrous and impious religion, which had spread over and infected all nations: he alone hath introduced the true Religion; by which, to this day, the one true God is adored, and is loved. To this day, as we see, the Gentiles ask all from him alone, and render all glory to him alone. A character therefore so complete, as our Saviour's is, had not a God-man been the original, could not only never have really existed; but could never have been even invented by the human mind.

To proceed (from the internal evidence of divine Revelation, discoverable in the Gospel) to our second proof: Is the perpetual succession of the sacred Ministry, and of the true believers, another proof of the Christian Revelation?

Yes, the succession of the faithful Ministry, and of the true believers, all united in one progressive faith of the revealed doctrine, forms a

most credible authority, and an unexceptionable concatenation of evidence. This chain, more precious than gold, proceeds originally from the hand of God himself. He revealed to Adam (who was the first link in this chain) the mystery of redemption, to raise him from the desperate shock which the infernal serpent had occasioned him to suffer. Then, after Adam, succeed Abel, Seth, Enos, &c. Henoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, with the other just Judges: David, with a succession of the faithful Kings and holy Prophets, worthy successors of the respectable Patriarchs. To them again, succeed the zealous, great and magnanimous Macchabees, with innumerable other Saints and Martyrs, an honour to the Jewish nation. These extend the sacred chain of evidences to the arrival of *The desired of all Nations.*

Here again the said chain, redoubled, continues with fresh lustre: Apostles, Martyrs, Doctors, Confessors, Virgins; whose very names; were not the nomenclature too immense to be here inserted; would at once fill the faithful Christian's heart with congratulatory exultation and ardent devotion, and the Infidel's with conscious confusion.

These

These holy personages, down from Adam, all linked in one faith, shone like bright stars amidst the darkness of infidelity and depravity. These, *alone*, maintained the inviolable belief of the *one* only, true and living God; and through all ages, lived up to the purity of their faith: while the rest of mankind were falling off into idolatry and the most abominable absurdities.

Yet, if the Deist were believed, and divine Revelation rejected: all the Saints of God from the beginning, must form a chain of absurd enthusiasts, or unaccountable impostors. Nay our Saviour himself must be regarded as their Chief, centre and author, What madness! What blasphemy! Such nevertheless is the evident alternative: Our faith is either grounded on true Revelation, or on imposture. Either the Apostles published known errors, the holy Fathers and Doctors all preached falsties, the Martyrs were tortured to death for lies, the greatest Christian Princes and Legislators published extravagancies, all the Saints laboured in vain, and Divine Wisdom has deceived us; or our faith is derived from Revelation, and consequently, is true beyond dispute.

Is the accomplishment of the Prophecies,

which was the third proof proposed above, an eminent evidence of the Christian Revelation?

Doubtlessly it is. The tribe, Gen. xlix. family, Jer. xxiii. &c. Virgin-Mother, Is. vii. birth-place, Mich. v. with each particular circumstance relating to the life, passion, resurrection and ascension of the Divine Messiah, had, for ages before his birth, been all so minutely described by the Prophets, as to prevent the possibility of mistaking his Person. He was, according to the unanimous testimony of the Prophets, to descend from David. His enemies were to strike, rebuke and spit upon him. Is. l. v. 6. To pierce his hands and feet: and to cast lots for his robe. Ps. xxi. v. 17, 19. To scoff at him, to shake their heads in derision of his hopes, and even to tempt and challenge God to deliver him from their fury and from the most disgraceful death. *ibid.* and also Wisdom ii. v. 20. To present him with gall and vinegar. Ps. lxviii. v. 22. &c. &c. See the prophecies of David, Isaiah and the rest, ("Who are from the beginning." Luke i. v. 70.) demonstrated by Eusebius, Huet, &c.

In short, the same God who spoke to his former people by the mouth of his Prophets; chiefly to declare the future coming of the Redeemer, and to characterize his individual person;

son; has now already spoken to us by his Son, the Redeemer himself.

Do Miracles demonstrate divine Revelation?

Yes: True Miracles are the irrefragable evidences by which Almighty God, speaking to Man, absolutely commands attention. These therefore are the chief and principal proofs of the truths of Revelation. For, being above the power of creatures, they can be performed by none but the Creator. Nature's Author, alone, can change created nature. He, for some higher motive, and according to his eternal decrees, can dispense in those natural laws which he himself established.

To pretend that God, by suspending in some instances any particular law of nature, can not produce a true miracle; were either to transfer to nature the attribute of Immutability, or to attempt to deprive the Creator of that of Omnipotence.

Have not Devils also performed true miracles?

Neyer. Those fallen Angels, being of a nature superior to ours, can indeed by their natural

faculties, if unhindered, perform what seems wonderful in the eyes of men. And God has sometimes permitted them to exhibit certain *wonders*; yet, by their delusions, those only were imposed upon, who had deserved to be deceived by them. Those were seduced, who longed for the seduction. But the Demons never raise the dead; give sight to the blind; or produce any *beneficial, permanent*; or, still less, any (strictly speaking) *true* miracle. Because this *must* exceed the natural agency of all creatures. The Devil's power is circumscribed: and though he may be permitted to present certain phantoms or spectres to the sight; yet, respecting a true and real miracle, he stops short, and owns: "This is the finger of God." Exod. viii. v. 19. In fine, since all that the evil spirits perform, is in order to hurt, as in the case of Job; an Astronomer, by foretelling an eclipse; or an experimental Philosopher, by various exhibitions, is (without any conjuration) able to equal most of their performances; or at least, to surpass them in utility. "They (*Demons*) hurt first,—then cease to hurt, and are believed to have cured." Tert. Apol. 22. But they never co-operate with God to promote any good.

Were

Were the sacred Scriptures themselves acknowledged to proceed from divine Revelation, by the evidence of Miracles?

They were. The written word of God was evidenced by miracles performed by the inspired Authors: or, which is equivalent, by such prophecies as were visibly accomplished while the Prophets yet lived; and which were termed: The Prophetic sign. The miracles recorded in scripture were published at the same time when they happened; and were, therefore, a sort of challenge and appeal to eye-witnesses: yet never were they contradicted by any coeval authors.

Again, the authenticity of the Law and the Prophets was confirmed and *canonized* by our Saviour himself, whose miracles were evidently beyond dispute. For neither Jew nor Pagan, contemporary, nor long after, ever attempted to contradict the too well known facts and miracles which the Evangelists attested; which their own repeated miracles also, and numerous eye-witnesses confirmed.

Even when the Son of God was agonizing on the cross, the Deicides themselves confessed his miracles: "He saved others." Mark xv. But
some

attributed the uncontroverted miracles of Jesus Christ, to magic; that is, to the Devil; rather than to God: others to a phantastical discovery of the ineffable name of God.

Why then did the Jews attempt to mis-ascribe his miracles?

It was, to elude the obvious consequence, of necessarily admitting that his whole doctrine was from God. This consequence had been demonstrated to them, even by the man born blind. John ix. And experience convinces (in the case of Deists, for instance, and of wilful sinners) that where the passions are interested, the prevaricator defies the force of reason, and is proof against the conviction of conscience.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Which is the chief and most important of all miracles?

The miracle of miracles, is: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Christ is risen from the dead; wo to infidelity! If not; our faith is vain. Here is the crisis: on this all depends. He had said:

" No

" No man taketh *it (my life)* away from me :
 " but I lay it down of myself (*as if it were a*
 " *robe*) : and I have power to lay it down : and
 " I have power to take it up again." John x.
 v. 18. Then, after his death and burial, when
 his tomb was blocked up, sealed and guarded,
 with all the caution that his suspicious murder-
 ers could invent ; he, notwithstanding, rose
 again the third day ; and appearing to his scat-
 tered, dejected, and now almost incredulous
 disciples ; he ate and conversed frequently and
 familiarly with them, in open day-light, for
 forty days. He chid their defect of faith, and
 fully instructed them in the mysteries of his
 kingdom, or future Church. More than five
 hundred persons saw him at one time. 1 Cor.
 xv. v. 6. He ascended to heaven, visibly, in
 sight of many witnesses. All these witnesses,
 with nothing to hope for, here ; but much to
 fear, from their testimony : testify exactly the
 same *visible and palpable facts*. They suffer tor-
 ments : but *not one* recants. They at last lay
 down their lives in testimony of the Resurrec-
 tion : which, how incredible soever, was to them
 a clear *fact*, deliberately examined, and infal-
 libly known. What more convincing testimony
 could we even wish for ?

The

The miracles, moreover, performed by Peter and the rest, *in the name of Jesus*, rendered their testimony of the Resurrection unexceptionable. The Jews were, on seeing these, converted, by thousands; and eagerly petitioning baptism, were washed in that sacred blood, which they had just before been spilling. The miracles of St. Philip the Deacon evidenced the Resurrection in Samaria: and soon after, a numerous Church was likewise established at Antioch.

The Gentiles, as well as the Jews, crowded to the Church, and believed the Resurrection of their common Saviour. For thus he had promised, that after his passion he would "Draw *all things (both Jews and Gentiles)* to himself." John xii. v. 32. So thoroughly moreover were these Converts convinced of the Resurrection, that undaunted, and secure of immortality, they defied all the torturing and sanguinary efforts of hell, and the frequent and horrible apparatus of death.

Show the final evidence of the Resurrection, briefly, from the accomplishment of our Lord's prophecies.

He

He *assuredly* and clearly foretold, that after his Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, he would send down the Holy Ghost on the Apostles; that they should be enabled to confute and silence the cavillings of the Jewish Magistrates, and to convert the Gentiles: that the faithful should receive the *Gift of tongues* and of other miracles; that some of the then present generation should live to see Jerusalem, with its august Temple, besieged, taken and rased; that after his Gospel should have been preached to the nations, the Jews should be dispersed; besides other particulars relative to the sufferings of the Apostles and the future state of his Church. These predictions, how incredible soever at that time, were punctually, as we now see, accomplished beyond all doubt. In a word, our Lord foretold, at once his Resurrection, the dispersion of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles. Now, since we see the two latter predictions accomplished, can we doubt of the first? The inference is too evident.

No room therefore is left for further debate concerning our Saviour's Resurrection. And consequently the whole coherent chain of our faith, which depends entirely upon the Resurrection, is evidently and indisputably proved.

But

But have not some from the beginning, in spite of all evidence, protested against the Resurrection; and others, even of late, repeated the protestation?

Yes. Behold the substance of their Philosophic scrutiny! To relate, is to expose it.

1st Testimony: "His disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were *asleep*." Matt. xxviii. v. 13. Sleeping witness!

2d Testimony, of minute Philosophers, roused seventeen centuries too late: *What is certain*, is, that a miracle *seems* impossible; and that a wise Philosopher, were he to see one, *would run mad*. That *all* Jerusalem was not convinced of the Resurrection. That those who published it were illiterate, simple and credulous; and at the same time, interested, crafty and intriguing men. That if a whole city were to attest a miracle, seen by them all; it would still degrade a Philosophic Demagogue to believe it. In one word: That we can not admit the Resurrection, without submitting to the belief of all the Christian Mysteries. Now the eternity of torments, *especially*, were alone sufficient to subdue the generous vigour, cramp the liberty, and blast the God-like prerogative of our *humane* philosophy; which

which is too irresolute to fix the view on eternity, and too weak to soar up, (though from principles sufficiently evident) to the firm belief of what we can not see.

May one then, without presumption, pity such philosophic infidels, and despise their authority?

Most safely. Whoever resists the evidences of the Resurrection: "Is proud, knowing nothing." 1 Tim. c. vi.

Nothing is more apt to dazzle and mislead, than a fashionable smattering of various sciences, by which a weak mind aims at useless applause. Whereas a deeper penetration into natural science, and an ardent desire of every useful truth; by enlarging, improving and perfecting the rational faculty itself; are highly conducive to Faith. For, as a man truly noble, is affable; truly rich, is liberal; truly brave, is merciful; truly great, is modest: so the truly *wise*, or solidly learned man, is sure to be humble, to own (like Socrates) his insufficiency; and consequently is well disposed to submit, on sufficient evidence, to the belief of the Resurrection, and of every mystery, which it confirms. For the more human reason is improved, perfected and

K

elevated,

elevated, the nearer it advances toward those revealed truths of faith, which the *carnal man* can not conceive. This is evident to all who read the ancient Pagan authors. Never was a true Philosopher an enemy to Faith. Nay even Pindar declares that: "The power of the Gods being exerted, nothing ever seems to be incredible."

The effect, produced by the Resurrection alone, is visible: We see the nations converted, enlightened and sanctified. We investigate the origin of so incredible an event. The Catholic Church assigns the precise date of each Gentile nation's conversion to her faith. We find also the most authentic history, of the new Testament, in entire correspondence with what that Catholic Society testifies, of the Resurrection, &c. This Divine code has already been discussed and approved, for seventeen hundred years. For, since all were highly interested in its contents, it has ever been the great object of most attentive scrutiny. Yet those excellent geniuses, Pauls, Denises, Clements, Ignatiuses, Justins, Irenæuses, Tertullians, Origenes, Cyprians, Basils, Jeroms, Augustins, &c. &c. examined, and believed. They had a near and clear view of the irresistible evidences of the Resurrection. To many of them that *cardinal Fact* was confirmed by the eye-

eye-witnesses then alive; to others, by the frequent miracles that continued even down to their times.

Finally, we may acquire an additional motive to the credibility of the Resurrection, by reflecting that the faith of those primitive Christians was stronger than death. For, from the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord, to the year 313, repeated strokes of deadly persecution echoed, almost incessantly, through the whole extent of the Roman Empire. Yet the Church was invincible. The storms beat against this House, established by Divine Wisdom; and even threatened its utter ruin: but it was founded on that Rock which, in spite of all adverse powers, shall sustain the Fabric unshaken to the end.

What is remarkable in your fifth proof, or the Dispersion of the Jews?

The Dispersion of the Jews, as foretold by our Saviour; without their total extinction which gradually and naturally ought to have succeeded after the ruin of their state; is another striking evidence of the truth of Revelation. We see the monument of a divine ven-

geance, in the vagabond condition of the scattered tribes of Israel.

What then is thy crime, O most despised and wretched Nation, for which thou art abandoned to suffer this desperate captivity; not terminated after seventy, nor even after seventeen hundred years; without a Prophet to lament over thee, or to console thee with the least glimpse of hope? Thou hast not departed from thy God, by recurring to any idol for thy deliverance from the trying rod of affliction. Ah! But thy fathers pronounced the fatal sentence: *His blood be on us, and our children.* Therefore thy City and Temple are ruined, thy tribes and families confounded, thy priests and sacrifices irrevocably lost, and thy very preservation serving only to perpetuate thy reproach.

Still the continuation of this once chosen and peculiar people of God, a numerous race and visibly distinct from the nations, among whom they have existed through so many ages, is a prodigy unparalleled in the history of mankind: a permanent miracle, and a visible evidence of the truth of our revealed religion.

We come now to the sixth and last of the evidences which we proposed to produce.

Sixth

Sixth evidence: The Conversion of the Gentiles, or the propagation of the Gospel to all nations.

What instruments or ministers did our Saviour employ to propagate the Gospel?

God, ever jealous of his incommunicable glory, chose the twelve Apostles, the most weak and inadequate instruments, to convert the world: That *no flesh* might share in the glory of such an enterprise. See St. Paul, 1 Cor. c. i. The Apostles, therefore, were simple, ignorant, weak and even gross men. When their Lord was apprehended: "Leaving him, *they*, all fled." Mark xiv. v. 50. Less generous than the disciples of Socrates! Nay even after his resurrection, disappointed of that temporal kingdom from which they had entertained such flattering hopes, they were still stupidly incredulous.

But no sooner had they received the Holy Ghost, than they were seen changed into most enlightened, generous and undaunted; yet innocent, upright and prudent characters. Immediately, during the feast of Pentecost, St. Peter speaks in public with surprising energy and intrepidity; and by his speech, which miracles

confirm, he converts many thousands of those most obstinate Jews. He now not only confesses, "That he knows the Man:" but openly declares, That "there is no other name—(*but the name of Jesus*) whereby we must be saved." Acts iv.

Thus the Apostles, contrary to all worldly policy, began to publish the Resurrection in Jerusalem (as Christ had ordered them) in presence of those very Priests and Magistrates who had so lately crucified their Lord, and had struck them also with consternation. They are imprisoned, scourged, threatened: but refuse to be silent; resolved to *obey God, rather than men.* Acts iv. And the Sanhedrim, though muttering this complaint: "You have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us." Acts v. v. 28. yet can not further resist the Omnipotent, who speaketh so intelligibly in them, and by them operateth such palpable miracles. But alas! most of them are only anxious to avert a present vengeance of that innocent blood, which by horrid imprecations they had lately challenged; and still refuse to adore him whom they had crucified.

Was the propagation of the Gospel, by the Apostles,

postles, an undertaking evidently proceeding from God alone?

Yes. The Apostles, though poor, simple and illiterate men, were by Divine Wisdom, *preferably*, chosen for the following incredible enterprise: To oblige not only Jews, but Greeks, Romans and Barbarians, Priests and Philosophers, learned and unlearned, to abandon their ancient and darling worship; to renounce all the Gods of their renowned ancestors; to destroy their temples, contaminate their idols, neglect their oracles, and relinquish their flattering, sportive and sensual festivals.

But to what purpose? To adore one only God, in three persons; the second person being, *a God-man*, who died on a cross: to submit their reason to the other incomprehensible mysteries of the Christian faith; which to the *Philosophers* of that enlightened age, seemed *a folly*: to resist their passions, even such as either their judgment, corrupted by vicious habits, had esteemed blameless; or inveterate superstition had patronized: to observe, on the other hand, either virginity, or strict nuptial chastity; to despise worldly honours, riches and pleasures; to prefer the last or lowest place; nay to despise life itself
for

for Christ's sake. To take up their cross daily; by denying, resisting, hating *themselves*, or their corrupt nature, with its inclinations and passions: but effectually to love their enemies. To esteem all sorts of self-denial, abstinence, mortifications, sufferings, persecutions and voluntary poverty, as their chief and solid happiness. And, finally, to hold themselves as mere pilgrims on earth, and to be always in readiness for martyrdom; in order to gain such a reward, as, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man ever experienced. See Is. lxiv. and 1 Cor. c. ii.

Nor could the promised compensation, of a *hundredfold* in this life, be with propriety proposed by the Apostles as an adequate inducement to embrace the faith. Because, till their converts had already received the faith, that promise of Christ was itself to them incredible, and consequently ineffectual. And, not to mention that this *hundredfold* was to be accompanied, "*with persecutions.*" Mark x. v. 30. what adequate notion could Pagans have of such a spiritual recompense as the faithful receive, in the serene peace and heart-felt joy of a good conscience; and especially in the solid hope and increasing confidence of attaining to eternal bliss, by passing through temporal *persecutions*.

The

The objection, that the mutual charity and liberal alms of the primitive Church might be a sufficient inducement to numerous profelytes; is as absurd as it is impious. Who furnished those charities? Not the Apostles, assuredly. They were collected from the recent Converts; and were the evident fruits of their lively faith. To whom were they distributed? To those *prior* Christians of Jerusalem, poor widows, &c. who had been reduced by temporal losses sustained for the faith. We should hope that infidelity is nearly vanquished, since it is reduced to such futile objections. For St. Paul himself precluded all hopes of emolument from faith, by declaring that: "If in *this life only* we hope in Christ, we are of all men *most miserable*." 1 Cor. c. xv. v. 19. Our joy is caused by *divine hope alone*: and only the inflamed love of our Saviour can make us rejoice in suffering for his sake.

What is the result of such doctrine, proposed by such Apostles?

The world scorns, opposes and rejects it. The Apostles, as their Lord had forewarned, are *hated by all men*. The Gospel *every where meets with contradiction*. See Acts xxviii. and also Ps.

ii. Those who publish this doctrine, so opposite to *flesh and blood*, are persecuted, even to death. St. Stephen and St. James are slain. The rest; who still persist to publish the Gospel; are destined, the first opportunity, to like slaughter; and all disperse.

Being then dispersed, and Saul their zealous persecutor converted, how were the Apostles received by the Gentiles?

When a few poor, simple and helpless men were seen attempting to confute all the renowned academies of the world; and announcing the Gospel in the Areopagus; at Rome, the centre of learned superstition; and all over the Empire: and pretending to found a spiritual empire, a Kingdom of God (far more ample and lasting than Rome had hitherto possessed), which should be superior to all distinction of tribes, tongues or nations; and unite all in one faith and union of charity and religious sentiments: All the wise men of this world were amazed.

They observed that the Author of that incredible, and seemingly extravagant project, was *Jesus Christ*, who had been lately crucified at Jerusalem. But, in what subsidies, what protection,

tection, plausible doctrine, eloquence, and the like means, the Apostles could confide, they could not find. The Apostles were expressly charged to reject those ordinary subsidies and human means: yet, even without them, they were positively commanded, to go and teach all nations, and to bear witness to the very extremities of the earth, concerning *what they had seen*, to wit: their Lord's death, for the redemption of the world; and his *Resurrection*, for its justification. Behold, said the Redeemer to them, I send you, like sheep, among wolves: yet without scrip or purse. Be not solicitous about what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall suggest all to you; and your eloquence (irresistible to your adversaries shall consist in the Truth of your testimony; which ye shall be able also to demonstrate thus: *In my name* ye shall cast out Devils, speak all languages, &c. Fear not death: I am the Resurrection and the Life. Fear not any human power: all power is given me. If ye suffer for me, ye shall be blessed; and death itself shall be to you the passage to true life. What then could terrify those, who had seen the Author of such promises himself risen from the grave?

But

But since the world detested the restraint or yoke, and derided the seeming folly, of the Gospel; the Apostles must necessarily desist, and own the enterprize frustrated?

On the contrary—What?—Finding the whole world, as a vehement torrent, bearing against them; they stand firm and undaunted. Replenished with the Holy Ghost, and having the omnipotent name of *Jesus* in their heart and in their mouth: They cure the sick, raise the dead, cast out Devils, speak all languages, &c. By these credentials, by the forcible eloquence of such miracles, they command attention. Reason herself remains in respectful and silent astonishment: her conjectures are all confounded by the evidence of the present Deity; and she finally yields to the visible authority of *the Supreme Reason*. Wherever Jesus Christ is announced, the idols fall; as Dagon before the Ark. The nations embrace his faith; resolved, on what conditions soever, to avert the future wrath of God.

At the distance of near eighteen hundred years, we behold before our eyes *The world converted*, from such inveterate superstitions, to such a pure and divine Religion, by such incredible

credible means. We find it impossible to account for this astonishing revolution caused in the moral world, unless by those miracles, which through all ages have been assigned as its true cause. Nor is there under the sun any other, but the Name of JESUS, able to establish the Church as we behold it established. By the facts themselves therefore, we are compelled to confess that, "This is the change of the right hand
" of the most High." Ps. lxxvi. "This is the
" Lord's doing: and it is wonderful (*or mira-*
" *culous*) in our eyes." Ps. cxvii. All logical quibbles, metaphysical reasonings, geometrical demonstrations, are unnecessary. The Light of God hath been revealed to the Gentiles: and the effect is visible to this day.

What judgment ought we to form of *all* the evidences of Revelation?

Having now considered the six more conspicuous evidences of Revelation: The internal evidence of the written word of God, the perpetual succession of the sacred ministry and of the true believers, the accomplishment of the prophecies, demonstration of miracles, dispersion of the Jews, and conversion of the Gentiles:

let us suppose some one to regard each of these proofs, considered apart, as insufficient, nor absolutely convincing. If so, we entreat him to reflect well on the force that they must necessarily acquire by being all united (as in fact they are) and co-operating all together to form *one* sufficient and satisfactory evidence, of the truth of Revelation. Let them then be collected in one view.

Let him consider also, that the evidence of *the Resurrection*, for instance, imports the truth of *the Gift of tongues*: and that the latter, in like manner, being evidenced, suffices to convince us of the former. For if our Saviour had not risen again, his disciples would not have received the *promised Gift of tongues*: or had they not received that gift, his Resurrection itself could not consistently have been, as it was, proposed to the world as the *leading or cardinal* object of Faith. Thus in short, if we admit but one link of this concatenated Faith; the Whole, of the coherent mysteries, follows: and the miraculous *Gift of tongues* is demonstrated to have been so frequent, so public, so common, and even so notorious a fact; that no historical truth ever was, or can be, better established than is this link or evidence of our faith. Had not *the Gift of tongues* been
been

been a well known fact, it is impossible that St: Paul in his epistles, to *whole* Churches, should so zealously insist on their correcting certain improprieties in the use of that gift.

Take a view, in fine, of the inimitable purity and sublimity of the Christian doctrine; of its origin, from the creation; of the punctual accomplishment of the prophecies; of the variety and frequency of miracles; and especially, of the dispersed Jews, and the converted Gentiles. Add to those evidences: The universal and unparalleled union of the true Catholics, in the Christian faith; the incredible duration of the Church; its invincible martyrs, &c. &c. all co-operating as evidences of Revelation. Do not these, if duly pondered, suffice to excite the faith of any *reasonable* man, who is not interested to resist the (sufficiently) known Truth?

By such evidence the Son of God has rendered our faith and hope in him *complete*. The world has submitted to its *Divine* Redeemer: and this is a final proof, beyond appeal. For if, as SS. Augustin and Thomas remark, you should pretend that the world was converted without miracles, you introduce a still greater miracle. Miracles are therefore an indisputable fact. And these render Revelation also indisputable.

Finally consider the miraculous conservation of the Church. From this world she has not, *naturally*, one friend to expect, for her support; since she ever contradicts and condemns its favourite maxims. Yet, supported she is. Now, as the same Omnipotence which created the world, is necessary to conserve it; so the all-powerful hand that established the Church, is evidently seen in its conservation. Hell has, indeed, opened its gates and emitted all its hostile powers, for eighteen ages, against the Church; but the infallible word has said: *They shall not prevail.*

THE MYSTERIES.

What judgment are we to form of the Christian Mysteries?

The mysteries, relating to the nature and unlimited energy of the Deity, are, as must *reasonably* be expected, infinitely sublime. They exceed the human capacity. Yet it is not possible to discover any contradiction, or inconsistency in these revealed mysteries. They are indeed, to us, ineffable. No tongue can express an adequate definition, nor can any comparison taken
from

from *finite* (essentially differing from *infinite*) nature, convey a clear and precise notion, of the divine nature and its energy. These therefore we believe, just as God has revealed them; and the same we consequently term: The divine Mysteries.

It is evident that with these mysteries, that divine system of morality which has reformed the world, is so essentially connected, that they must be either both admitted; or, together with the miracles that ratified them, both rejected.

The mystery in which the ineffable existence of the Deity is revealed to us, consists in this: God, who is essentially one (one nature or essence), really and truly subsists in three distinct Persons: distinct from each other, not in essence, but in their relative manner of being. For in the Deity there is but one origin or principle. The Son and the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father. Thus: God the Father derives his origin from no other person; God the Son derives his origin (actually, eternally, ineffably) from the spiritual and infinite generation of the Father; and God the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son; as from one united origin. He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. He is that eternal and essential Love, by

which the Father and the Son mutually, eternally and infinitely love each other.

Yet with regard to whatever is not God, the three distinct Persons act, through the whole creation, in inseparable union; as Gen. i. God said: "Let *us* make man to *our* image." This one Deity, subsisting in three Divine Persons, fills, moves, governs the whole. Without his will nothing can happen; not a hair of our head can perish.

This one true Deity is a pure Spirit, is alone good, and is the only source of our beatitude. In him alone the Christian believes and hopes: him alone (truly and absolutely) he loves: him alone he adores.

Is not the mystery of the blessed Trinity altogether inconceivable?

Undoubtedly. But had God, before all creation whatever, subsisted eternally in one only Person, as well as one Divine Essence or Nature; would not the revelation of such a solitary existence, in our idea, have seemed as strange, as now does the Divine Essence subsisting in three Divine Persons?

In

In what light does Revelation present the mystery of the Incarnation, or what we are to believe particularly respecting the Son of God made man?

It informs us, that our Saviour is the eternal Son of God, equal to, and consubstantial with his eternal Father; of whom he is the *Power*, *Wisdom*, and perfect *Image*. He is the *Word*; the supreme *Reason*; the *Splendour* and *Effulgence* of the Father's glory, eternally coexistent with him. The *Beginning* and the *End* of all creatures: by whom, and for whom they were all made.

He assumed the nature of man, to glorify his Father and to redeem lost man. He, being made man, is become *our justice* or sanctification: and of his *Plenitude* we all, respectively, receive. Our very reason is his image, and a sort of ray derived from his eternal Light. For he is, "The true Light, which enlighteneth every man." John i. Without him the Father createth nothing: nor can any creature come to the Father, but by him.

To approach, by affection, to our Saviour, is to live: to depart from him, is to die. The Saints who preceded his Incarnation, were saved
by

by faith in him, to come: "Beholding them" (*the promises of Redemption*) afar off, and "luting them," Heb. xi. v. 13. and those who have succeeded his arrival, are saved by faith in his Redemption, already complete.

Thus Jesus Christ is the eternal life of all. All tends to him: all centres in him: he draws all to himself. He is our hope, our light, our way, truth, life, virtue, beatitude. He, as St. Paul frequently inculcates, is the *Head* of the whole Church, of Angels and men; and the faithful are his *Body*. Or to the same purpose, relative to our souls: he is styled *The Sun of Justice*; because he fertilizes, enlivens, enlightens and glorifies all who admit his salutary influence. For he is, in truth, the source of life and centre of light.

No sooner did this *Sun of Justice* appear, than by his light the divine attributes were reconciled with the otherwise mysterious conduct of the Creator, relative to his providential dispensation and government of the moral world. The unaccountable, though too evident, effects of original sin were explained, and remedied: the prophecies, illustrated by his (*glorious, yet humble*) course through life; with the assurance of his second coming, as Judge, in absolute majesty and

and glory; were all rendered consistent, intelligible and sufficiently clear. Superstition and Vice were exploded; Truth and Virtue were established. As, in the material world, the whole spectacle of visible objects is illustrated, when the Sun arises in all his splendour.

Without this *Sun of Justice*, this mystery of a God-man; all were darkness, confusion, horror and despair, in the moral system of the universe. Human nature would present a prospect amazingly horrid, of irremediable vice, and (its necessary attendant) misery. For whether the infidel should contemplate the nature of God, or his own; without Jesus Christ, all were gloom. "And (*they shall*) look upwards; and they shall look to the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, weakness and distress, and a mist following them." Is. viii. v. 21, 22. The experience not of Jewish only, but also of Gentile infidels can attest this.

But believe in Jesus Christ: all is light, order, and a cheerful prospect of hope. Even the, otherwise gloomy, sinner is summoned to raise his dejected head to the light of his Redeemer: "Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten thee." Ephes. v. v. 14. He therefore with humble confidence

fidence cries out: "O God be merciful to me
 " a sinner." Luke xviii. v. 13. "Come ye
 " to him and be enlightened: and your faces
 " shall not be confounded. This poor man
 " cried, (*for mercy*) and the Lord heard him:
 " and saved him out of all his troubles." Ps.
 xxxiii. v. 6, 7. The true believer is exempted
 from the disheartening perplexity of his past
 sins. Since, as he well knows, not only the just,
 by the Redeemer, are liberally rewarded: but
 repenting sinners also, who cease to offend, are,
 on account of his ransom, mercifully absolved.
 He even came into this world, not to call the
 just, but sinners to repentance.

The Son of God, in a word, is the Judge of
 all. He has the keys both of heaven and of the
 infernal abyss. He shall exalt the humble, and
 humble the proud. This judgment will succeed,
 after a sufficient trial; and every free agent,
 Angel or Man, shall be ranged according to the
 immutable order of equity. Free will is the ob-
 ject of this judgment: succoured by the grace
 of our Redeemer, it will save us; or corrupted
 by the general infection of inordinate self-love,
 it will cause our condemnation. And, finally,
 whereas human justice is able only to *punish*, im-
 perfectly, some manifest sins; our divine Judge
 will

will not only assign the just and perfect punishment to each sin; but will also leave no degree of merit unrewarded.

THE DIVINITY OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Do the holy scriptures expressly declare the Divinity of our Saviour?

They do. In them our Saviour is constantly mentioned as, He, by whom all things were made and arranged. And St. Paul. Heb. i. v. 8. alleges the 44. Ps. v. 7. to convince the Hebrews of this fundamental truth of Christianity: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." This evident text the Apostle cites, where he is professedly proving the personal dignity of the Messiah, and after having shown that *The Son of God* is infinitely superior to the highest ranks of creatures, and to be adored even by all the Angels. *Ibid.* Isaiah likewise attests the Divinity of the Messiah, in express terms: "Behold your God will bring the revenge—God himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of
" the

"the dumb shall be free." *Is.* xxxv. Here, the titles: *Your God*, and *God himself*, as evidently characterize the Divinity of Christ, as the words following them do his identical miracles. To this clear passage our Lord (with his usual modesty, and emphatic allusion) referred his great Forerunner, as to a clear evidence *for his disciples*, from the visible accomplishment of that conspicuous prophecy. For Jesus having, even in presence of John's messengers, performed the signs foretold in that prophecy: "Answering "he said to them, (*John's disciples*): Go and "relate to John what you have heard and seen: "The blind see, the lame walk—the deaf hear, "the dead arise." *Luke* vii. v. 22. Now the deaf whom he cured were also, usually, dumb; and therefore, recovered at once their hearing and speech: which renders the accomplishment of that prophecy abundantly complete. Then our Saviour, v. 23. *ibid.* added: "And blessed "is he whosoever shall not be scandalized in "me:" that is, whose faith in me shall not fail, on account of the indignities which I am to suffer, even without opposing any miracle in my own defence. These words also sufficed to refer his Prophetic Forerunner, to another passage of the same great Prophet (*Is.* viii. v. 13, 14.):

"Sanctify

“ *Sanctify the Lord of Hosts*: and let him be
 “ your fear, and—your dread. And *he* shall be
 “ a sanctification to you. But for a stone of
 “ stumbling (*a scandal*), and for a rock of of-
 “ fence to the two houses of Israel, &c.” Christ
 is, moreover, here termed: The Lord of hosts,
 our fear and dread. The other Prophets might
 be here cited, to attest the Divinity of the Mes-
 siah: but we must proceed.

In the new testament the Divinity of our Re-
 deemer is sufficiently (if not abundantly) evi-
 dent. “ He (*St. John the Baptist*) shall convert
 “ many of the children of Israel to the Lord their
 “ God. And he shall go before him (*before the*
 “ *Lord their God*) in the spirit, &c.” Luke i. v.
 16, 17. See Ven. Bede, on this text, tom. 5.
 “ The Word was God.” John i. “ Bishops,
 “ to rule the Church of God, which he (*that is*,
 “ *God*) hath purchased with his own blood.”
 Acts xx. v. 28. “ I and the Father are *one*.”
 John x. v. 30. These words were to the Jews
 peremptory: for upon hearing them, they “ took
 “ up stones”—v. 31. “ There are three that
 “ bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the
 “ Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these *three*
 “ *are one*.” John, ep. 1. c. v. v. 7.—All nations
 were to be baptized: “ In the name (*not in the*

M

“ names,

“ *names, of any creatures*) of the Father, and of
 “ the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. xxviii.
 —“ No one knoweth who the Son is, but the
 “ Father; and who the Father is, but the Son.”
 John x. v. 22. Because the *absolute* knowledge
 of either is equally infinite.—“ That all men
 “ may honour the Son, (*in what degree*) as they
 “ honour the Father.” John v. v. 23.—“ My
 “ kingdom is not of this world.” John viii. v.
 36. Yet, King he owns he is: to wit, in heaven.
 —“ *All things are put under him*; undoubtedly
 “ he (*the Father*) is excepted, who put all things
 “ under him.” 1 Cor. c. xv. v. 27. Were our
 Saviour, *essentially*, less than his Father, how
 absurd would it be, in explaining that verse of
 Ps. viii. (to which St. Paul frequently appeals),
 to except God the Father from the general sub-
 jection of *all* to the Son.

It is well known that the Jews were repeat-
 edly forbidden to adore any one else, but the
 living God. And in the new testament, to
 adore, προσκυνᾶν, is applied to God alone.
 Yet this adoration is paid to Christ, in the gos-
 pel, by all such as truly know him. See Matt.
 xiv. v. 33. John ix. v. 38. &c. Nay: “ In the
 “ name of JESUS every knee should bow of
 “ those—in heaven, on earth, and under the
 “ earth.”

"earth." Philipp. ii. v. 10. What truer signs of adoration can be rendered, even to the Father? Now as it is, in fact, certain that the faithful, *with his approbation*, often *adored* him: so it is, that St. Thomas, after the Resurrection cried out to him: "My Lord, and my God." John xx. Had he not been truly God, it would have been essentially necessary to check such idolatrous excess: whereas he said to St. Thomas, v. 29. "Thou hast believed:" to wit, as thou oughtest. His disciples applied to him the *incommunicable* attribute of Omniscience: "Thou knowest all things." John xxi. v. 17. They acknowledged in him the Divine Power, of increasing faith, forgiving sin, saving from otherwise inevitable dangers, and commanding all nature. And (though Antiochus had been fatally struck, for not *giving glory to God*) our Lord never rejected any of the *divine* titles; nor ever attempted to disclaim, or restrain the *divine* properties ascribed to him daily, with gradual increase. He, on the contrary, conscious of his supreme dignity and majesty (respecting which we are to apprehend, not excess, but defect of homage), said to his disciples: "You call me Master, and *Lord: and you say well, for so I am.*" John xiii. v. 13. This (spoken at the last supper) is

explicit. He also openly declared, that he is to come, *with great majesty*, to judge the world. Not with the Father's majesty only: for he himself " Shall sit on the seat of *his* majesty. Matt. xix. v. 28. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are at his disposal. The Angels are *his*. Matt. xxiv. v. 31. The Spirit of God is *his* Spirit. Acts xvi. v. 7. These words are *his*: " I am the beginning and the end, saith the " Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is " to come, the Almighty." Apoc. i. v. 8. " All " things were made by him." John i. See Coloss. i. Heb. i. &c. He is eternal: " The glory " which I had before the world was." John xvii. v. 5. " In the beginning was the Word." John i. " Before Abraham was *made*, I *am*." John viii. v. 58. Mark the distinct and precise meaning of the verbs, *made* and *am*. He, while on earth, was also in heaven: " The Son of " man who *is in heaven*." John iii. v. 23. He, sending the Prophets, had endeavoured to gather the children of Jerusalem, as the hen does *her* chickens. Matt. xxiii. He is the creditor to whom the debts of sin are due. See that eloquent and inimitable dialogue of our Lord with Simon, Luke vii. In a word, the Church of Christ constantly believes the Divinity of her Founder

Founder: she is, after nearly two millenaries,
 still proof against all the attacks of philosophic
 prevaricators: and as her Divine Spouse will
 never forsake her, so she shall remain faithful to
 him till the end. For, *He*, "thought it not
 "robbery (*rapine*, or *unjust arrogance*), to be
 "equal with God." Philipp. ii. v. 6. *He* truly
 is (though this *Catholic* faith is now, as from the
 beginning, deemed *rapine*; and is a scandal to
 the Jews, as well as a folly to too many of the
 Gentiles): "To them that are called (*to his*
 "*Church*)—Christ the *Power* of God and the
 "*Wisdom* of God." 1 Cor. c. i. v. 24. Now this
 Power, or this Wisdom; if not *infinite*, can not
 be that of God; if infinite, must be God. Be-
 tween infinite and finite, or God and a mere
 creature, there can be no real mean. See that
 whole first chapter of Corinthians. For in it
 the Wisdom of God, as displayed in the mystery
 of the Incarnation, is so admirably delineated,
 that it might alone suffice to dissipate the va-
 rious subtleties of modern Arians; who vainly
 attempt to exclude all *mystery*, or at least to dis-
 semble the appearance of that *rapine*, *scandal*
 and *folly* which, as the Apostle declared, the In-
 carnation must naturally present to the eye of
 human reason, if destitute of faith. We may

moreover observe, that our Saviour gradually increased the revelation of his own personal dignity. Because, as *God is love*: and as the Son of God became man, for the love of us; died to evidence his love, and to challenge us to a return of love: as he also remains with his Church, out of pure love, to the end; and to give us confidence, is veiled under the sacrament of love, inviting us all to approach and unite ourselves with him: as, in short, his love for us was the cause of his Incarnation: so (love being naturally incompatible with the sudden awe of Majesty) when he appeared on earth, his divine aspect was not, unless occasionally, seen to display the awful and majestic dignity of his Person. And, John xii. v. 47. He declared that he came not to judge, but to save the world. His mien was therefore placid, mild, accessible, amiable and attracting. The meanest individual of the Jews, seeing his indulgent and affable demeanour, approached to him with confidence.

Now the imitation of his humility, and faith in his Divine Person, being both equally requisite to our salvation, he began the great work of Redemption, by laying the foundation of humility, in his own example. He usually styled himself

himself, *The Son of Man*: to gain the confidence and love of mankind, by condescending to that humble title for the love of us; and at the same time, to teach us humility. Then, on the other hand, the testimonies repeatedly given by God the Father, and also his own miracles, serving to demonstrate his supreme authority, many began to acknowledge the *adorable* dignity of his divine origin. On this he applauded their confession of the truth; and confirmed this their faith, by *gradually* declaring himself: The co-equal and coeternal Son of God. We see, John xi. our Lord with divine circumspection *gradually* conducting Martha's confession of faith to its due perfection, thus: Martha first believes him to be, a most powerful Intercessor: "Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother (*Lazarus*) shall arise. Martha—I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection.—Jesus—I am the resurrection and the life (*absolutely and essentially, I am so*)—believest thou this? She saith to him: Yea Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." John xi. from v. 22 to 27. Her faith being thus raised to perfection, she consequently must, and does,

does, believe all his words. And he, to reward her docility and confirm her faith, commands Lazarus to arise and come forth.

In fine, as the hour approached, when he was to return to his Father, he appeared more and more explicit: till, rising from the dead, and staying forty days to confirm his faith, he completed that revelation of his Divinity, which his Church received from his Apostles, and has hitherto retained as the foundation of all salutary faith. We have a specimen, in scripture, of what he revealed during those forty days:

“ “ All power (*i. e. Omnipotence*) is given to me.” Matt. xxviii.

Nay, whenever he defers to his Father, his deference is a divine lesson of humility, without the least detriment from his *substantial* equality. For he likewise informs us, that his and his Father's power, as their nature, is one and the same: “ For what things soever he (*the Father*) doth, these the Son also doth *in like manner*, “ —*As* the Father—*so* the Son also giveth life “ *to whom he will.*” John y. v. 19, 21. See that whole chapter.

Finally, for a decisive conclusion of what the whole Church was to believe, observe the express declaration of St. Paul to the Romans, concerning

cerning Christ's two natures united in one divine person: " Of whom (*the Israelites*) is " Christ according to the flesh (*his humanity*), " who is (*according to his Divinity*) over all " things. God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. ix. v. 5.

Are not some expressions found in scripture, which are apt to be misused to favour modern Arians, Socinians, Deists and the like?

There are such. But we have already shown, that Almighty God left, both in the system of nature and of grace or faith, a certain mixture of obscurity, adapted to our present state of probation. Yet, though there be (*till we hear the Church*) a sort of equilibrium in the evidence, sufficient for the trial of faith; we need only to appeal to the following visible fact, to prove that our Saviour's Divinity has been, *sufficiently*, evidenced: The Catholic Church has, for above seventeen hundred years, remained convinced of this important and fundamental truth. And, believing it, thousands have attained to the perfection of virtue and sanctity. The effect, therefore, of *sufficient* revelation, being visibly produced; by what rule of argumentation can any man,

man, not shutting his eyes against the light even of reason, attempt to deny the *sufficiency* of the cause, that is, the competent evidence of the revelation?

We do not, indeed, pretend to establish from scripture alone, this main *Corner-stone* of the Christian Church; because the written words, (if each phrase be considered alone, and without referring to the purport of the respective Authors, or deferring to the *necessary* authority of the Church) may sometimes appear even contradictory; as, *I and my Father are one*: and yet, *My Father is greater than I*. So, Christ is David's son: and is yet his Lord. But if, as the Christian rule directs, *We hear the Church*; the point is immediately clear. For the Church being, *necessarily*, established on the foundation of divine Infallibility, "The *pillar and ground* of the truth." 1 Tim. c. iii. v. 15. not only asserts and confirms the authenticity and divine revelation of the scriptures themselves; but also, expounding their true and originally intended meaning, she invariably insists upon the Divinity of her Founder and Saviour. The Catholic belief of this chief tenet is attested by the tradition of all ages, down from the Apostles. And on the unerring authority of the Catholic Church,

Church, our faith in this, as in every other point, and in every age, rests unshaken. But no wonder that whoever have separated from the Catholic Church, should find their faith obscured and bewildered; since they refuse to be guided by her *necessary* light.

The scriptures, then, as explained in the *one* Catholic Church, suffice to establish the belief of our Lord's Divinity: The same inspired scriptures were not written for Arians or any other *independent* sects, who may choose to separate from the *one* Catholic communion: They, therefore, answer their whole intended purpose. For, though some will perversely mistake our Saviour's meaning, still he declares: "My sheep" (*in my one fold*) *hear my voice.*" John x. v. 27. Now, to hear the Church, is to hear Christ. Such are the avowed facts.

Were the human mind, moreover, allowed to form its weak conjectures concerning the counsels and motives of the Divine dispensations; it should seem that one reason why the scriptures did not still more clearly and indubitably express our Lord's Divinity, was: that, as our Saviour himself chid the Demons for proclaiming prematurely his Divine origin, and chose rather gently or gradually to reveal his Divine Person;

so his first disciples, who wrote the new testament, should likewise, for a while, be rather less explicit, in point of his *consubstantial* Divinity: in order not suddenly to scandalize either the Jews; on account of their main, true and revealed tenet, The *essential* Unity of God (for there can be but *one* divine principle and origin); or the Gentiles, on the other hand, on account of their inveterate prejudice in favour of Polytheism. But the faith being established, both among the Jews and Gentiles, when the last gospel was written; and some heretics, as Cerinthus and the Ebionites, beginning to deny the absolute Divinity of Christ; at length St. John, that *Son of thunder*, loudly proclaimed; "In the beginning—the Word was God." John i.

In short, though in assigning the motives of the divine dispensations, we must necessarily hesitate, and lisp like infants; yet the facts themselves (our surer guides) speak audibly, and are *sufficiently* intelligible. These facts are: 1. Christ sometimes spoke, as the Son of man; and sometimes also, as the Son of God. 2. After his ascension, the Apostles also style him *God* (see their epistles), and attribute the divine properties to him. 3. In spite of the Arian intrigues of those dissenters, whom St. Athanasius,

ep. to Jovian, declares to have been, *in comparison with the whole Catholic Church*; "a few; who embrace, says he, the opinions of Arius:" The Church always has adored, and does still adore, his *Divinity*. And the authority of the Catholic Church is, in every age, equally indisputable.

These facts being evident; we must not be surpris'd if he, as on the cross he did, styles his Father, "My God:" or if he qualifies himself as an humble suppliant: since these, and all similar expressions, not only serve to declare his office, of a *mediating God-man*, charged with our sins; but are also a proof, that when he asserts his equality with his Father, his assertion can not be suspected of presumption or *rapine*, but is a *necessary* confession of the Truth. It was moreover necessary, against opposite heresies, to show that he was both truly man, and truly God. And hence also, as Ven. Bede observes: When our Saviour, before the performance of certain miracles, rais'd his eyes to heaven and sigh'd; he showed that he was truly *man*; and then, by absolutely commanding the miracle, he showed that he was likewise truly *God*.

It is, in fine, remarked that the moral precepts of the Gospel are generally far more clear and

N

precise,

precise, than those which relate to faith. But since, with regard to the latter also, we are referred to the Church: "He that heareth you, heareth me." Luke x. v. 16. by hearing the Church the whole is rendered *sufficiently* and equally clear.

Finally, to preclude all danger of hesitation, relative to this main point of Revelation: Did our Saviour not only assert the Divinity of his Person, but also confirm his assertions by miracles, wrought to prove the same?

Yes: that he asserted it, is evident from the texts cited above. And again, who but God could speak with the authority of Man's absolute Lawgiver? "You have heard—(*he then cites the law which God had given them*). But (*or moreover*) "I say to you,"—Matt. v. v. 21, 22. & seq.—Who but God is our last end, to whom we ought to refer all our actions, whom we must prefer before all things? "He that loveth father or mother more than me—is not worthy of me"—and he that shall lose his life *for my sake*, "shall find it." John x. v. 37, 38, 39. He visibly requires that we sacrifice all to him, without referring our oblation to any higher end.

Nay

May he assures us, that He is the proper object of our Faith: "Every one that—belisveth in
 " me, shall not die for ever." John xi. v. 36. And that though *personally* distinct, he is *essen-*
tially undistinguished from his Father: "He
 " that seeth me, seeth him that sent me." John
 xii. v. 45. In like manner, c. xiv. from v. 9.
 " Jesus saith to him: Have I been so long a
 " time with you; and have you not known me?
 " Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also.
 " —Believe you not that I am in the Father,
 " and the Father in me? Otherwise believe for
 " the very works sake." Thus, the Son being
 the perfect Image of the Father: The Father
 was seen and glorified by the demeanour of
 the *incarnate* Son; and the Son was mutually
 (and most conveniently) attested, *signed or sealed*,
 and glorified by repeated signs from heaven, ac-
 knowledged to proceed from the Father. The
 Gospel regularly ascribes the glorification of
 the Father, to the Son; and that of the Son, to
 the Father.

The words of Christ to Philip, cited above,
 John xiv. "Believe, (*my essential unity with my*
 " *Father*) for the very works sake:" express the
 purpose of his miracles, to wit: That the world
 might believe in him, as in a person of the same,

indivisible, essence with God his Father. This is, again, most evident, from Mark ii. where certain Jewish Doctors charging him with blasphemy, apparently implied in his words: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee:" and *they*, being convinced, that no one but God can forgive sin: Jesus, *on purpose*, to show them that in truth he could efface sin, instantly cured the palsy. He clearly saw the obvious consequence which those Scribes *ought* to draw from that miracle. From their avowed principle they must, consistently, reason thus: God alone can remit sin: Jesus hath, by an evident miracle, (the indubitable *Prophetic sign*, among the Jews) demonstrated, that by his efficacious words, "*Thy sins are forgiven*," he as truly effaced them, as he now hath truly restored the palsied members to full vigour. He must therefore be truly God. Thus it is altogether certain, that the Son of God produced his miracles to prove the Divinity of his Person; and performed them even while he was professing himself to be *one*, equal and consubstantial with God his Father.

It is beyond all doubt, that the Jews were highly offended at his equalling himself (intelligibly, frequently and, to them at least, sufficiently) with God: John v. v. 18. or that he, being

being a man, *made himself God*, c. x. v. 33. His words, therefore, were *sufficiently* intelligible, even to his enemies. Still he never corrected the notion, which they certainly had, that he declared himself God: but permitted them to persecute him, even to death, chiefly on this score: and then, as he had foretold, he rose again, to convince them that he *was* God. Had this not been absolutely true; had he, in reality, not been God, but a mere creature; then, by declaring himself coexistent and consubstantial with God, and obliging all who hope to be saved, to believe in him, and to adore him, as God; he must have been (from the mere supposition of which blasphemy, the human mind recoils with horror) himself a most impious impostor, and God his Father the promoter of idolatry. For his miracles were such, as have obliged the world to believe in him. And, believing in him as God, the whole earth, as we see, has been converted from the most enormous excess of vice, to an incredible perfection of virtue. Does the Almighty empower impostors to do such miracles as must infallibly impose on the world? Yet the *jealous God*, who says: "I will not give my glory to another." Is. xlviii. v. 8. bore witness to the Divine Author of Salvation, and

stamped on his works the great seal of his Divinity. And shall incredulity attempt to make us imagine, that God has sanctified the world by imposture; converted all nations by a lie; and finally, notwithstanding his omniscient providence, left his most faithful servants in abominable idolatry? Absurd blasphemy!

Were the miracles of our Saviour such as might be clearly distinguishable from all others, and evidently peculiar to the supreme Lord of all?

Yes. The Saints did miracles, in the name of God; and, as his servants, faithfully gave the whole glory to him: but our Saviour, as God and supreme Lord of nature, commanded with unparalleled, absolute and irresistible authority: "*I will. Be thou made clean. Volo, Mundare.*" Matt. ii. v. 3. "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, *I command thee, go out of him: and enter no more into him.*" Mark ix. v. 24. "Young man, *I say to thee, arise.*" Luke vii. v. 14. "He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: "*Peace, be still.*" Mark iv. v. 39. "*Talitha cumi*, which is, being interpreted, Damsel (*I say to thee*) arise." Mark v. v. 41. "He cried

" out

"out with a loud voice (*that all might hear how*
 "*absolutely his command was issued*): Lazarus,
 "come forth." John xi. v. 43. At this all-
 powerful command, the putrid corpse revived:
 as shall likewise all the dead, when he shall send
 his Angels, with a loud or energetic voice, em-
 powered by him, to summon them to his tri-
 bunal.

Nay more, our Lord speaks of his miracles, as
 of his own, as well as his Father's *inseparable*
 performance: "One work *I have done*; and
 "you all wonder." John vii.—He declares also,
 that had not his miracles been of a singular na-
 ture, *sealed by his heavenly Father*, and peculiar
 to himself, the Jews would not have sinned by
 refusing to believe in him: "If I had not done
 "among them the works that no other man hath
 "done, they would not have sin: but now they
 "have both seen and hated both me and (*in me*)
 "my Father." John xv. v. 24. Thus we see that
 as his Person was, so his miracles were distinct
 from those of his servants. Yet, as his Person
 proceeds from his Father's, so his miracles pro-
 ceeded both from the Father and the Son, acting
 in the union of their thrice holy Spirit. And
 consequently the Jews, by rejecting him rejected
 his Father also. They objected indeed, that he
 violated

violated the Sabbath; and this was their ordinary stumbling-block: but he proved, by his works, that he was Lord even of the Sabbath, and that both the Father and the Son continue to act incessantly: "My Father worketh until now; and I work." John v. v. 17.

The miracles of the Son of God were not limited to particular times or places. He refuses them, only when they are demanded to gratify curiosity and presumptuous incredulity, or without a just cause. But when faithfully petitioned, or when the exertion of his omnipotent virtue is necessary to excite faith, he is never deaf: he is always attentive to the faithful and perseverant cries of humanity in distress: always ready to succour: never at a loss for means and ability. All nature is obsequious to his authoritative command: The dead arise, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the sick are healed, cripples walk, the possessed are delivered, the stormy sea is stilled. Heaven, Earth, Hell, testify the divine authority and supreme dominion of the Son of God: "The Arm of the Lord." H. liii.

Nay, even without speaking, he multiplied the loaves, and changed the water into wine. If he condescended to use any means, the choice
of

of these was to him, unless for instruction's sake, quite immaterial. His miraculous virtue was naturally inherent: "All the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue *went out from him*, and healed all." Luke vi. v. 19. See also Mark iii. &c. Whereas the Prophets were inspired *occasionally*, or by intervals only: The Son of the living God *prophetically* saw the secret thoughts of men: which is the exclusive property of him who made man.

Finally, he being himself the very origin whence all miraculous virtue flowed, empowered others to work miracles in his name: "*In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall*"—Mark xvi. v. 17, 18. And certain it is, that no true miracle ever was, or can be, performed in any name but that *of God alone*, "*Who alone doth wonderful things,*" that is, *miracles*. Ps. lxxi.

Such, on the whole, was our Saviour's doctrine: such his evidences. Performing his miracles, he acts as Lord of all: He *only says the word*, with ease and unconcernedly; and instantly all creatures acknowledge the voice of their Creator. Nay he usually defers each miracle, till the petitioner expresses his faith in *him*, or styles him *Lord*, &c. Yet in his ordinary demeanour;

demeanour; in his humane, familiar and exemplary conversation, as man: He is the invincible and perfect pattern of *Humility*: God his Father, and the Church his Spouse *animated by his Spirit*, sufficing to attest his Divinity.

Hitherto the evidences of Revelation render the Christian mysteries most credible: yet is not Original Sin (though a fundamental point) inconsistent with divine Justice?

If human nature is free from original sin, the whole revealed mystery of Redemption must, we own, be groundless. But though all orthodox Christians believe original sin; they still maintain the belief of divine Justice far more inviolably than those do, who, to evade a certain consequence of sin, pretend to deny it. But how, says the unbeliever, can God punish us for Adam's frailty? In mysteries *sufficiently* evidenced, it is presumptuous to ask our all-wise and omnipotent Creator, *why* or *how*, he decrees or acts? The children of a justly degraded minister never presume to ask their Sovereign: Why they are not in that rank, in which, had their father been faithful and loyal, they might have had pretensions to succeed him. The gifts
of

of God are, moreover, all gratuitous. Whether he gives, or takes away, his name is equally blessed. Nay, when he deprived man of those privileges and exemptions, which were the concomitants of original justice; he consoled him by the promise of a Redeemer. The remedy of Adam's sin is thus rendered infinitely more advantageous, to all who refuse not to admit it, than the immortal privileges granted in paradise could have been, without it. What is life, without Jesus? Where Jesus is, there is our true paradise.

Then, with regard to the unbaptized, who are otherwise innocent, or free from personal sin; these the Church resigns into the hands of their Creator. And, though the entrance into *gratuitous* bliss must be denied them: the Church has not defined, that any positive torment is their lot. We rather suppose (with S. Thomas) that, though not in the joy of their Lord, they are free from pain and sorrow.

Is not Hell, or the eternity of torments, contradictory to reason, or all possible notion of divine Justice, and a mystery unworthy of our faith?

No.

No. The eternity of punishment after death, is an essential point of faith; and must be the inevitable lot of such as have resisted our Saviour to the end of life. Where, and by what precise means, the reprobate are punished, the Catholic Church has not absolutely specified or positively defined. The specifical punishment is not, strictly, the object of our faith: but since the eternity of its duration is so, the state of the reprobate is utterly desperate. For the eternal duration of hell is evidently revealed: but its pretended opposition to divine Justice, is far from being evident.

It requires, we own, a spirit strong *indeed*, to be able to fix the view on eternal punishments, without staggering reason. Especially if (like the Stoics, regarding all sins as equal) we disbelieve purgatory; and have too just reason, from our conduct, to infer that nothing but hell can be our lot. Hence the fury of the whole Epicurean herd is roused, on reading that the Son of God precipitated the swine into the abyss. And: *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*: sounds too harshly for the ears of a modern Philosopher.

Here is the *mystery* that chiefly scandalizes the faith of too many in this *humane*, but sensual age. Hence they wish and strive to elude the evidences

evidences of Revelation; and *therefore* they effectually do lose the gift of faith. Explain Hell away from the Gospel; and immediately pretended Socinians, Freethinkers, &c. will flock to the Church. It is on this account, that our modern infidels affect to slur over the *essential* attribute of Sanctity. This not one of them stops to amplify; as Voltaire did the earthquake of Lisbon, to render Providence doubtful; and, as in the conquest of Palestine, the thread of life shortened by the order of the Author himself of life and Lord of death, was exaggerated, to discredit the Word of God.

Yet God is as necessarily, a *holy and just* Judge; as he is, a good and merciful Father, or a liberal Rewarder. His attributes are all equally unlimited. Time is our day; eternity is his: and in the latter, all must be infinite. As therefore the infinite love of God for his creatures, so his infinite hatred of sin; as endless rewards, so endless punishments, correspond with his infinite counsels. But, as in heaven, so in hell, his Mercy or his Justice has prepared *many*, respective, *mansions*. And the final sentence of each reprobate will be more or less *tolerable*, in proportion to the degree of obstinate malice in
O each

each offender. Every rank, however, must there remain eternally fixed and immutable:

Wouldst thou, O infidel, not fear the power of thy supreme Sovereign, after thy death? Do good, and thou shalt secure his praise and enter into his joy. But if thou *wilt* persevere in evil, be assured that he is not vainly styled *the just Judge*. The sword of his Justice is already drawn against the rebels who are of a rank superior to thine. Hell was not prepared, *expressly* for thee; but for the rebel Angels. Imitate not their obduracy. Fulfil the moral law: "Do the will of *God*," as our Saviour (John vii. v. 17) directs, in order to remove all prejudice of interested passions, and so to see the evidences of his whole *divine* doctrine. Then the excessive apprehension of hell will not tempt thee to strive thus, in vain, to elude the evidences of Revelation. For God is just: and thou shalt receive, *just thy deserts*. Merit future reward, in that kingdom which was prepared, *expressly*, for the Good: and thou wilt believe the reality of a future state. Epicurus and Ovid wished for annihilation: Socrates, Plato and Cicero, for immortality. Nay Socrates (or Plato, in his name) maintained: "That, after mature examination

"mination and reflection, he found the eternity
 "of the torments of enormous sinners, most
 "conformable to wisdom, reason and truth."

In Gorgias: see also Plato's Phæd.

This life is a time of trial; and God alone limits its duration to each one. Now if by death God did not limit, especially the habitual sinner's life; nor, during life, bestow on him the (*gratuitous*) grace of conversion; he would continue to repeat or renew his sin eternally. Nay his sin is, in reality, perpetuated and eternized, by his immutable malice. He has finally resolved and determined, to slight his Creator's Will: and, as much as in *him* lies, he would never cease, even effectually and from the abuse of his freedom, to offend his God. But by death he is deservedly deprived of his misemployed talent, faculty, or free choice of good and evil. His hands and feet, and every *free* power, are bound (as the devils also are, when deprived of the power of doing harm): his intellect itself is condemned to utter darkness: and he is capable of nothing but the continuation of his sin and misery. See Matt. xxii. v. 13. Were it not for this stop; as any *Body*, once put in motion, naturally follows the line of direction in which it began; so would the deter-

mined sinner continue, even from free choice, to sin effectually for ever. For God is never *obliged* to bestow the *grace* of conversion.

With men indeed, the mere, though fixed, resolution of sinning passes unpunished; because they judge according to what is visible to them: "But the Lord beholdeth the heart." 1 Kings, c. 16. God is just, and his judgment perfectly right. For the consent of the will, or the choice of sin, is so essential to constitute guilt; that without it no action can be sinful: but external or effectual completion, is accidental; and can be the object of punishment, only in as much as it proceeded from the internal act of the free will. However, human justice itself; when the crime becomes visible and falls under its cognisance; by inflicting death, exerts its utmost effort: brands the sinner with eternal infamy; and punishes him even *for ever*, by the penal and irreparable privation of this life.

For another clear evidence; let us, with the luminous and angelical Doctor, review the nature and essence of sin. Sin is in the nature of high-treason, committed against infinite Majesty. Now every insult is measured by the true and real dignity of the person offended: how then shall we comprehend or determine the enormous

mous extent of a mortal offence against the Deity?—Again, as S. Thomas demonstrates, sin essentially consists, in abandoning the Creator for the enjoyment of the creature, contrary to his known will. What therefore could be more worthy of the divine Justice and Wisdom, than that the reprobate for ever remain (according to that free choice which they have made), separated from God, the fountain of all Good; and on the other hand, inseparably and penally attached to the creature? Now this privation, and this forcible and penal attachment, precisely constitute hell. The agency of creatures employed in divine punishments must be highly painful, when applied by an offended Deity, who orders their texture, regulates their activity, and in other circumstances renders it agreeable and useful. Of this we are advertised, even in this life: since health and pleasure, or distemper and pain, depend on the orderly, or disordered disposition of our bodies.

The scripture also, explains the punishment of the reprobate, thus: "He loved cursing (*that is, the divine malediction*), and it shall come unto him: and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him. And he put on

"curling (*malediction*) like a garment: and it
 "went in like water into his entrails, and like
 "oil in his bones." Pl. cviii. v. 18. The Ju-
 stice of God is therefore not obscured by this
 mystery; but is, even in this life, rather illu-
 strated: and shall hereafter be eternally displayed
 to clear view, and glorified by all.

In a word, the efficacious grace of the Al-
 mighty is indispensably necessary to rectify or
 convert the sinner's perverted will: to produce
 its total change, from the inordinate love of
 creatures, to the due and ordinate love of the
 Creator. This grace may be obtained during
 the sinner's life; but not after his death.

Why, then, say some rash mortals, did our
 Creator give us Free Will; since it is an instru-
 ment so dangerous in our unsteady hands?

That we might merit heaven. For how could
 we merit, were we not free? The sun, how be-
 neficent soever, does not merit: neither do
 earthquakes, storms, or lightnings demerit.

The facts, as elsewhere, are here again our
 best guides: God foresees all events and their
 most remote consequences: man is, in *evident*
 fact

fact, free: God is absolute Lord of all: He is Bounty, and Love itself: yet, "Justice and judgment are the establishment of his throne." Pf. xlv. v. 2. (See the description of the last judgment, through this psalm.) Who then shall dispute his attributes, or criticise his conduct? He wills our good. If, therefore, we correspond with his *good Will*, we shall be eternal evidences of his benevolence and mercy; if not of his justice.

But, though free will is the necessary and proper object of divine judgment; yet all strict comparison, of human with divine justice, must be defective. Man's attributes are finite: nor can he be *absolute* Lord over any of his fellow creatures. God judges of *his* creatures absolutely, as they really and truly are: man, as they are in comparison or proportion with each other. The proper rule of justice, among creatures, is: To render mutually to each other, just what the debtor has received, or owes. But the Creator, receiving from no one, can owe to no creature. And therefore, the only rule of his justice, relative to his own creatures gratuitously produced by his infinite Wisdom and omnipotent Will, must be: To distribute his rewards and punishments to each, according to the use they

they make of their free will, either in obeying, or resisting his supreme Will.

The permission of sin, however, though it is a fact, alas too evident; must still remain, to us, a mystery: and regarding its punishment: "Thy judgments (*O Lord*) are a great deep." PL. xxxv. v. 7.

Why was this terrible mystery, regarding the eternal punishment of sin, revealed?

The revelation of this mystery was proper, not only to apprise us of the impending danger; but also to serve as the most efficacious restraint on the vehemence of mens passions. And this latter effect is likewise an additional proof of the truth of our belief in this regard: for certainly the God of Truth restrains from sin, not by fictions, but realities. Yet, was it not for the dread of hell, to what enormous excesses would not sins, in spite of human justice, be gradually carried by the unbridled passions?

Finally, from the revelation of this dreadful eternity of punishments, we are convinced of the infinite malice of mortal sin. Sin is an unfathomable abyss. Iniquity is itself, an impenetrable mystery. Cease therefore, vain man, cease

cease to cite thy Creator to thy tribunal! "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. ix. v. 20. Can thy vain speculations elude the eternal duration of hell? That woful state was, expressly prepared, for the Devil and his angels: do not obstinately render thyself their accomplice. Thy God has benevolently, and sufficiently, admonished thee of the desperate precipice; and of the necessity of watching and praying: and now, thy tears will be truly more efficacious, to avert the everlasting fire due to thy past sins; than any subtle evasion, how plausible soever it may seem to thee, can possibly be.

If, after all, some unbelievers still resolve to cavil: we must beg leave to supersede their endless wanderings through the usual maze of *whys* and *hows*, by this final answer: We are happy in the Catholic belief, relative to our future state; if you be content with your conjectural persuasion; we will, laying aside polemic contest, pray for you. We will pursue our course; and you *may* also yours. Life is short: death (as your late chieftain too palpably experienced) is no sophister.

Mean while, all Christians must keep in view these evident facts, or certain principles: There

is one true God: He sees all: He is just and good: Him all Christians adore. We suppose our Religion (the best we know) revealed by him: We mean to please him: We both abstain and suffer, *for his sake*. He therefore must approve our intention, at least. And his Bounty will infallibly reward our pious endeavours; even though our evidences of Revelation had misguided us to such means of pleasing God, as were not positively decreed. We have, therefore, much to hope for, and nothing to fear; from relying on our revealed hope of futurity. Unbelievers, on the contrary, have nothing to hope for, unless annihilation; and have too much to fear. For their apprehensions, of incurring the everlasting punishment of the living God, are still invincible. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. v. 31.

If facts afford the clearest evidence, whence arises that reluctance which, in fact, the generality, even of Christians, feel in submitting to the revealed mysteries?

It arises, partly from the nature of the mysteries, being essentially incomprehensible; and partly

partly from the want of a due conviction of the insufficiency of human reason. Situated, as we are, in a state of probation, remote from the region of eternal light and immutable truth; surrounded by distracting cares and perpetual vicissitudes, in this short life: no wonder that our intellect should seem dazzled by every radiation or partial emanation, transmitted to us from God, the origin of all light and truth. It may be also added, that in too many instances, the corruption of the heart occasions that reluctance. As the irreligious Philosopher, prepossessed with the resolution of indulging his passions, yet terrified by the revelation of eternal punishments, attempts to raise his sceptic barrier against all the evidences of faith.

Our present state, upon the whole, considered with relation to the objects of divine faith, may be compared to that of a man born blind. To conceive the analogy, let us suppose that certain persons, of known probity and strict veracity, are successively introduced to the blind man. They all assure him of one and the same truth, which is: The existence of innumerable stars, and especially of the Sun with all the admirable and indubitable effects of his light. Will not the objects announced, or revealed by them,
appear

appear to that man incomprehensible? He can have no precise idea of them. Yet, if the authority of his witnesses be sufficient or satisfactory, he can not, reasonably, reject their evidence. For the testimonies form a positive proof, whereas his objections can be only negative; that is: being blind, he does not see the sun, or stars.

What impression must the whole History of revealed faith make on the unprejudiced and candid mind of one, who may be supposed hitherto utterly unacquainted both with revelation and its depositary, the one true Church?

Suppose a youth hitherto ignorant of all revelation, yet living up to the law of nature, and now introduced into human Society, as a candidate for revelation. Seeing successive deaths, he will infer his own. He will also ruminate on the sudden stop put to that admirable faculty of reasoning, which he had observed in those who, while alive, conversed with him. Having likewise remarked the privileged attitude of the human body, and that divine aspect which tended to make him regard man, as ranked at the head of the visible Creation: and still more, reflecting

reflecting on his own conscious reason, and discernment of right and wrong: he will be led to consider, to what purpose the Author of nature thus conducts his creation! Other creatures, he will see, serve indeed for the use of man: the sun and rain fertilize the earth; the earth nourishes cattle; cattle are for the use of man; &c. But to what purpose does man himself appear on earth? *Just to look about him, and to die?* What? After a short life, spent in a perpetual conflict between rational good and unaccountable evils, this viceroy of God on earth, as the quadrupeds, dies without distinction? Is the whole creation, therefore, a mere pageant and needless apparatus?

Here we inform him of the origin and progress of religion; so far only, as known and historical facts can guide. Thus: There is indeed a most venerable society called, *The Church of God*, said to have been in all ages from the creation of the world.

That society professes the practice of virtue to be its main business in this life; and such as live well, believe that after death they shall be admitted to a happy and immortal life.

All nations have been converted from stupid idolatry and savage impiety, in the name of

P

Jesus,

Jesus, the Head of this pious Society. Nay before his arrival, the very term *Virtue*, even among those who termed the rest Barbarians, meant scarcely more than animal or ferocious courage. The morals of the Romans, and of the Greeks themselves who were such Masters of the polite arts and sciences, remained still uncultivated; and they owed their perfect civilization to Christianity. The Christian religion alone taught them the divine spirit of mildness and humility: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart." Matt. xi. Hence also they *first* learned the true meaning and practice of patience, charity and chastity or Christian sanctity.

Moreover, if we may rely on their authority, this Society possesses a sacred book, dictated by the eternal God; which, though it contains incomprehensible mysteries relative to the nature and energy of God; yet being explained, just as they assure us it always has been, accounts for every seeming inconsistency in nature. This book *alone* assigns the origin, progress, virtues, vices, rewards and punishments of mankind. This book, they assure us, was composed by successive inspired authors, at distinct intervals; and

and still it evidently retains a strict connection, and is one concatenated narrative; one coherent system, of worship, justice, prophecy, redemption, and whatever relates to what they term religion, or the revealed kingdom of God.

But though their faith rescues us from the otherwise unaccountable phenomena in the moral world; it still does not supply the light of conviction. Wherefore many have cited the said scripture itself to the tribunal of human reason, and have protested against its authenticity, or its divine authority. Yet we must, in justice, remark that those who object against the sacred history, are apt to forget that since the ages in which the successive parts of scripture were written, many customs have been changed: that even now, some remote parts of the world differ widely from Europe in many points; and that an historian in general, must be tediously circumstantial in his narratives, if he attempts to prevent every plausible objection that, in future ages, or in different regions, may be started against the facts which, in his age and nation, were unquestionably evident. Does not the discovery of one only circumstance otherwise immaterial, often serve to account for

what, in history, seemed before incredible, or inconsistent?

But, finally, to conceal nothing from the youth in question: it must be confessed that, less than three ages ago, a certain German Priest, named M. Luther, quitting his Religious profession of St. Augustin's Order, coined a new system of justification, attainable by faith alone, without the meritorious co-operation of good works: and rejected from the ancient Catholic canon whatever books he chose.

From this precedent, others (as Zuinglius, Socinus, Spinoza, &c.) presumed also to submit and accommodate to the weak and fallible judgment of man, what was before held to have been revealed from heaven, and to be above all human capacity. Nay several other bolder men, who style themselves *Philosophers*, have either proceeded to explain away the original meaning of revealed scripture, or to reject the whole.

The candidate, here supposed, being sincerely desirous of truth, and virtue, (without which disposition, a mere idiot is subtle enough to evade all the evidences) and being now informed of the evident *facts* relative to revealed religion;

gion; will, of consequence, apply for farther information, to the one, perpetual, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; may then safely read the whole scripture; and shall undoubtedly admire, love and embrace that revealed faith; the thorough examination of which will have wholly impressed his mind with all the characteristics of truth; and will have filled his heart with the ardent love of Virtue.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

SECOND PART.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

WHAT is the Catholic or universal Church?

It is, the Society of Christians, spread over the world, yet perfectly united in one Spirit and one Profession of faith. These form one inviolable communion, participating of the same sacraments. The Laity is subordinate to those Apostolic Pastors, who are also themselves united under one, supreme and visible Head, the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Vicar of Christ, and Pope or Father of all Christ's flock.

But with Respect to our guidance, the sacred Hierarchy, or Catholic Ministry itself, is also styled the Church. This, his established government, Christ promised to assist and direct, to the end of the world; this is the Depositary of Faith; and is, precisely, *the teaching, the ruling or governing Church*; as distinguished from the Laity, or *the Church governed*.

How

How do you prove the Unity of the true Church?

First, from scripture: As there is only "one body and one Spirit: (*animating and uniting the whole body*)—one hope—one Lord, one faith, one baptism:" Ephes. iv. so there can be but one Church. "Is Christ divided?" 1 Cor. c. i. v. 13. And from the words of Christ himself: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd. John x. v. 16. "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate." Matt. xii. v. 25. "Not for them (*Apostles*) only do I pray, but for *them* also who through their word shall believe in me: "That they *all* may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, &c." John xvii. v. 20, 21. The Church was to be, *one* Spouse of Christ; *one* kingdom; *one* fold; *one* house, or family; *one* body. See the last and most pathetic discourse of our Redeemer, on the union of his Church, recorded by St. John. See also St. Paul's epistles.

Secondly, from the practice and doctrine of the primitive Church: The dissension, which arose among the Christians of Antioch; though St. Paul was there present, was referred to the Council of Jerusalem: and all submitted to its decision.

decision. Acts xv. "I believe—~~one~~—Church." Nicene Creed. "As there is but one sun to
 " enlighten the whole world, so there is but *one*
 " light of truth in the whole Church." St. Irenæus. "The House of God is *one*: there is
 " no salvation out of the Church." St. Cyprian, ep. 61. "God is *one*, and Christ is *one*, and
 " the Church is *one*, and the chair of Peter is
 " *one*, founded by the voice of Christ: no other
 " altar can be erected, no new priesthood intro-
 " duced, beside this *one* altar and *one* priesthood." Idem, ep. 43. "One episcopal See (*of Peter*)
 " diffused through the concordant numerosity of
 " many Bishops." Id. ep. ad Antonianum. "Who (*God*) established the doctrine of verity
 " in the chair of unity." St. Aug. ep. 105.

Thirdly. From the very nature of divine faith. Because since God, the Author of revelation, *hath spoken*; we must attend and obey. "God
 " who—spoke in times past to the fathers by the
 " Prophets: last of all, in these days *hath spoken*
 " to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed
 " heir of all things, by whom also he made the
 " world." Heb. i. The Son of God had an unquestionable right to prescribe the proper form of the Christian religion. And since whatever he has deigned to prescribe, or to re-
 veal,

veal, is the manifest will of our Creator; we are obliged to submit, absolutely and entirely, to all that has been revealed. First therefore, and chiefly, we must submit our reason, or prime faculty, to every revealed mystery, how incomprehensible soever; without exception, or *choice* of particular parts; because, He, who is the supreme Reason, has equally revealed them all. Secondly, we must submit our will, unexceptionably, to every moral precept, or prohibition; though to us, perhaps, as unaccountable, as the original prohibition to Adam and Eve; which forbade them to eat what God had placed before them.

It follows therefore of course: That all who, without consulting their own partial *choice*, submit to all the revealed truths, indiscriminately; must unite in believing one and the same doctrine, must profess the same divine system of faith and morality, and must admit one centre of Union. And, on the contrary, what Christian soever either excepts against any one revealed point, or obstinately refuses to practise any one moral precept, commanded by his Creator, the same rebels against God. Nay more, he "is become guilty of all:" or of transgressing the whole law. James ii. v. 10. For
the

the same God of truth, who says: Thou shalt not kill; says also: Thou shalt not covet, &c. The same who says: I and my Father are one; likewise says: This is my body. "Go ye therefore, *says he*, and teach all nations: baptizing them—teaching them to observe" (*to believe and practise*) What limited particulars? "all things whatever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii.

If a Christian can persuade himself: That without the will of God, one hair of his head may perish; and still admit divine Providence; then he may likewise assert: That the authority of the, hitherto, true Church may mistake error for truth; and misguide the faithful, in one article of faith; and still admit the Church infallible. But to deny the infallibility of the Church, is to reject all faith. This obvious consequence puzzled M. Luther in his project of reforming the Catholic faith. Nor could he have extricated his pretended reformation from the dilemma, had he employed no auxiliaries more powerful than his apparent zeal for the purity of faith.

The one, original, perpetual and true religion is preserved from essential corruptions and innovations,

novations, not by human genius, but by its divine Author. Were he not to watch over it by his special providence; it would, like all sublunary things, be exposed to alteration and ruin. For, from the beginning, we find that the faith and religious rites; revealed in that first state of the Church, commonly called the law of nature; and observed by Adam, Abel, Seth, Enos, &c. were, after the deluge, altered and corrupted by the diversity of profane forms of pagan Worship.

Then Moses appears, with evident credentials, authorized from heaven, not only to re-assert and preserve the religious truths originally revealed, and to re-enforce the moral precepts of the law of nature; but also to promulgate typical rites, peculiar to the Jews.

But, afterwards, Jeroboam corrupts this Mosaic law; adapting it, *politically*, to his ten schismatic tribes. And again, the captive colony in Samaria, coins a motley form of worship, a farrago, not unlike that framed by Mahomet.

Finally arrives, The desired of all nations. He supersedes, in a great measure, the Mosaic dispensation, completely terminates the typical worship, and on the ruins of the synagogue erects a far nobler Church:

Yet

Yet even here, we again find a variety of sects departing from the one great Catholic Church of Christ; as, Manicheism, Arianism, Pelagianism, the Greek schism, &c. Not to mention that *political* and martial system, framed by Mahomet; which confounded a corruption of Christianity, that is, Nestorianism, with Judaism and Paganism, in a chaos of childish absurdities. Before our eyes, moreover, do we not see (separate from the one, original and perpetual Catholic Church) Lutherans, Calvinists, or Presbyterians, Methodists, Anabaptists, Quakers, &c. &c. forming an endless diversity of jarring sects, each pretending to lead us to the kingdom of God? These, in reality, as the renowned Babylonian tower, are no more than the monuments of human presumption. "Is Christ divided?" 1 Cor. c. i. No, certainly: nor is it in the power of men, to violate the unity of his Spouse, the Church.

May we not apologize for all sects of Christians, by supposing them all to concentrate indiscriminately in the worship of the same true God?

By

By no means. To erect such a Pantheon for the admittance of every error, were to exclude the truth; which is essentially *one*. Nor can such an incoherent assemblage ever be the Church of Christ. "God is not *'the God of* " *diffension, but of peace.*" 1 Cor. c. xiv. v. 33. The spirit of pride, discord, schism and apostasy, is not from above; nor ever proceeds from the Father of lights. Either deny that the Church is perpetually governed and directed by the Spirit and invisible presence of her Divine Author, remaining with her Apostolic Pastors to the end: Matt. xxviii. or grant that such diversity of doctrine, rupture of communion, &c. are not approved by him, nor deemed indifferent. For surely, "They (*who pretend to reform the* " *Church*) can never produce any reformation " so useful, as schism is detrimental." St. Iren. b. 4. "To violate (*Catholic*) union, there never is " a just cause." St. Aug. b. 2: against Parm. c. 11.

Yet, no sooner had Luther, instigated by his pretended, famous, familiar *Genius*; apostatized from the Catholic communion, than some of his followers, to cover their own defection, began to distribute the heavenly mansions, not only among all sects of Christians, but even among their favourite Pagans: whose idolatry was, by

Q

Zuinglius

Zuinglius and the rest, charitably imputed to invincible ignorance. But they did not, we are willing to hope, reflect that *a divided kingdom can not stand*. To divide, is to ruin all Religion.

What are we to conclude from the Unity of the Church, which every candid Christian must admit as a doubtless principle, and an evident truth?

That all Christians are most strictly obliged to accede to her communion and to submit to the whole revelation, as she prescribes. For, as we admit the authority of the scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, &c. so we must except no article of the whole Catholic faith. It is most evident, from the gospel itself, that our Saviour never meant that his Church, his *one* fold, should be so divided as to consist of a diversity of sects, mutually refusing all *religious* communication with each other: or, that Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists and the rest, should regard their various persuasions as the constituents parts, or living branches of his *one* Church. They can not therefore be all equally safe. Nor can the true Church suffer such destructive schism or disunion.

Upon

Upon the whole, if we admit the evidences, and submit to the authority of divine revelation, we must consequently unite with that one, original and perpetual Society or Church, which the Son of God established as the depositary of his *whole* revealed doctrine. To this Church God daily added, "As many as were ordained to eternal life." Acts xiii. v. 48.

The Church is one. Yet, though its Unity be undeniable, there remains an apparent difficulty: Which of the opposite persuasions or jarring sects, is *The Church*?

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT DISTINGUISH THE ONE TRUE CHURCH.

IF there is but one true Church, society or communion, to which all Christians are obliged to adhere; is not this Church characterized, by certain marks, so as to be distinguishable and even conspicuous?

Q 2

Yes.

Yes. Ever since the first *great* heresy, of Arius, supported and patronized by the secular powers, began to spread its infection and even to raise its head so confidently as to attempt to vie with the Catholic Church, and to render her less conspicuous; or ever since the Council of Nice, an. 325; all Catholics have been obliged to make even explicit profession of their adherence to *The one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.*

Nor is it hard to distinguish this sole true Church, by these four discriminative marks: First mark, *Unity*; which implies uniformity in all matters of faith, and perfect communion in the participation of the same sacraments and in every religious duty. Second mark, *Holiness*; discernible in moral doctrine, fasts, penance, and particularly in celibacy; whence St. Justin, long before the Nicene Council, writes thus; " And " there are *many* (Christians) both men and wo- " men, at the age of 60 or 70 years,—persever- " ing in spotless virginity: and I *glory* in being " able to produce examples of such through all " nations." Apol. 1. ed. Ashton, Cant. p. 29. Nay the fruits of holy discipline are visible in a perpetual succession of canonized Saints.

Third

Third mark, *Catholicity*; with respect to time and place. Fourth mark, *Apostolic Origin, Mission, and Succession*. As the Father hath sent me, "I also send you." John xx. v. 21. Now, can any Christian admit these marks, and refuse to unite with the Catholic Church: which alone (evidently and beyond comparison) is characterized by them?

The true Church is not only distinguishable, but is altogether conspicuous. For, through the horrid chaos of pretending, protesting, and contending sects, we decry one original assembly, or Church, eminently superior to them all, mimicked by them all, envied by them all, persecuted by them all, pitying them all, and even with tears entreating and conjuring them to return to her charitable bosom and to submit to her secure authority. She bears the marks of a most venerable antiquity: she derives the mission of her ministers from the Apostles of Christ her Spouse; and her prime Pastor is acknowledged to succeed *Peter* himself. If any ask her name; she answers: "*Christian* is my name, "and *Catholic* my surname." St. Pacian, ep. 1. ad Sympr.

She is ennobled by her own genuine offspring, a numerous train of martyrs, confessors, virgins:

by the edifying sanctity of her religious Orders, and the Angelical and Evangelical celibacy of her Priests. She displays the glorious trophies of her victories over all the Barbarous nations successively converted and civilized by her alone. England, for instance, received the faith from her; by St. Eleutherius, in the 2d, and more completely, by St. Gregory the great, in the 6th age.

Repeated miracles, wrought by her alone, visibly prove the perpetual and special protection of her omnipotent Spouse. For, if some few miracles (and lives of Martyrs also) have been too lightly believed; on the other hand, it is certain that more, by far, either never were recorded, or the true records have perished.

She holds forth to the world the sacred Code, as the indelible charter of her divine prerogatives. Her inimitable Hierarchy is itself a standing proof of her divine establishment. On her breast these fair characters are legible: *Doctrine* and *Truth*: or *Light* and *Perfection*.

Her Doctrine, being inseparable from the *Truth*, is invariable and irreformable: whether she vindicates from error the truth of *Consubstantiality*; or of *Transubstantiation*: irrevocably anathematizing every innovation. "No inno-
vation:

"vation: nothing beside what hath been delivered down by tradition." St. Stephen 3d. century. And this has ever been the constant language of the Church.

She is always seen religiously guarding the deposit of her original faith; defying her enemies to accuse her of any breach of fidelity; never varying her canonical decisions; never changing her doctrinal language: because it is the language of uniform truth. She is seen, rather abandoning whole provinces of her religious empire, than ever consenting to alter one tittle of her original deposit; and hence, in every age, lopping off, as rotten branches, the proud and obstinate who refuse to submit to her authority.

Her very rites are beautiful, solemn, moving and, on account of their antiquity, most venerable. Their splendour is not obscured, but rather illustrated, by the frequent display of the salutary cross. She hides it not: and though she incurs the imputation of folly and weakness, she ceases not to propose it to all her true children. "For the word (*or preaching*) of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God." 1 Cor. c. i. v. 18.

She

She teaches her children, neglecting human respect, to imitate that grateful sentiment of the Apostle: "But God forbid that I should *glory*, " save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; " by whom the world is crucified to me, and I " to the world." Galat. vi. v. 14. Now, as St. Thomas truly remarks: "Every one *glories* in " those things in which he places his greatness."

If, notwithstanding all her marks of distinction, the Catholic Church in fact propounds, even as the terms of admittance to her communion, such tenets as lead to eternal reprobation; is it not clear that all her marks of antiquity, &c. are ineffectual?

Yes, if the Church were to teach essential errors; no prerogative could support her in their defence. But, in that case, together with the Church, the faith of Christ must also have perished. For, except the Church, to whom can we recur for the determination of all doubts relative to the mysteries of faith?

But the doctrine of the Catholic Church is not chargeable with any such impious or pernicious error. And, indeed, especially since the learned

learned Bishop of Meaux has exposed to the view of all Christendom the genuine faith of the Catholic Church, the most learned of her adversaries themselves have generously wiped off the vulgar aspersions, by which some had formerly attempted to disfigure her native form. And, on a full examination, each material objection proves to be either a calumny, or a particular abuse disapproved by the whole Church in general. Have not many English Prelates and Doctors (distinguishable from foreign Calvinists, Huguenots and the like, by a native tone of generous candour, and by their esteem for antiquity) ingenuously owned, that celibacy, episcopacy, subordinate hierarchy, fasting, confession, sacrifices or masses for the dead, nay every, *single*, point in which we differ are very ancient practices; and, if not *necessarily*, are at least laudably observed? Have not others even regretted that the civil powers, or secular authority, swaying the Episcopal jurisdiction, excluded so many of the ancient practices from the plan of that *politically reformed* Church which they established?

“Until the *dregs* of our times, I do not
 “know that it was ever disputed, Whether
 “Christians be not bound to be members of one
 “and

"and the same *visible* Church" Thorndike, *Just weights and measures*, c. vi. p. 44. This is truly candid, and indicates a sincere affection for Catholic union. Such sentiments, frequently occurring in many of the most eminent English Divines, command the tears of every well-instructed Catholic. How often did not St. Francis of Sales weep, particularly, for England? In reality, what does it profit a Kingdom, to attain to riches and honour; if its *salutary* religion be changed, corrupted, and at last ruined and exploded?

Do mortifications and works of penance, also characterize the true Church?

Undoubtedly. Our belief, hope and love of God, are manifested chiefly by abstaining and suffering for his justice sake. And therefore the whole new testament abounds with admonitions to practise self-denial and penance. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." Luke ix. v. 23. "This kind (*of devils*) is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." Matt. xvii. v. 20. Christ set us the example of a long continued fast: and expressly declared that, after his death,

death, his followers were to fast. Matt. ix. v. 15.
 "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence."
 Matt. xi. v. 12. "Through many tribulations
 "we must enter into the kingdom of God."
 Acts xiv. v. 21. "I so fight, not as one beat-
 "ing the air: but I chastise my body, and bring
 "it into subjection." 1 Cor. c. ix. v. 26, 27.
 "Our present tribulation which is momentary
 "and light, worketh (*or meriteth*) for us above
 "measure exceedingly an eternal weight of
 "glory." 2 Cor. c. iv. v. 17. St. Paul's mis-
 sion, to convert the Gentiles, was preceded by
 prayer and fasting. Acts xiii. v. 2. And his e-
 pistles abound with exhortations to fast and pray.
 It is also the observation of an eminent Christian
 Philosopher: "That a veil hides the scripture
 "not only from the carnal Jews, but likewise
 "from such Christians as do not *hate themselves*."
 Pascal's Thoughts.

Our Lord himself, whose life is our pattern,
 was *The man of dolours*. At the approach of
 his kingdom, he preached the necessity of pe-
 nance to all sinners who would not perish. And
 when St. Peter opposed his future sufferings
 (Mark viii.) he severely reprimanded this chief
 Apostle, by styling him Satan, or adversary; be-
 cause Peter had expressed the sentiments of that
 preposterous

preposterous (or, as it is now named, *philosophic*) humanity, which pretends to feel so sensibly for the welfare of the body, while it is insensible of that which regards the soul; *not conceiving the things of God*, but referring all to this life. Thus Peter's feelings, at that time, as those of the gross sensualist, were such as proceed not from God, but from *flesh and blood*. See v. 33. *ibid.* And hence, like *Satan*, he was attempting to avert those sufferings which were to be the ransom of the Church. But, in opposition to all such carnal sentiments, the Redeemer, v. 34. loudly proclaims the necessity of imitating his sufferings. Does not St. Anna's eulogy, Luke ii. consist in her continent widowhood, and perseverance in fasting and prayer?

Yet ever since Luther's reformation began, many Christians would fain paint the gospel, in the colours of the Alcoran, as not averse from even the *enjoyment* of temporal pleasures, or the gratification of those passions which are so con-natural to the corrupt inclinations of men.

Our Saviour assures us: That the way to eternal life is very strait. But these, more generous, forsooth, and more enlightened Doctors, have discovered a new way; very *broad*, indeed, and pleasant: yet crowded with such passengers

as

as render it suspected. For: "There is a way
" that seemeth to a man right; and the ends
" thereof lead to death." Prov. xvi. v. 25.
Doubtless, St. Benedict, St. Dunstan, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. C. Boromeo, St. J. F. Regis, &c. &c. were endowed with singular gifts, and extraordinary graces, to enable them to oppose and stem the raging torrents of relaxations and vice; and to reform some abuses in discipline, or manners: but Luther, Zuinglius, Carlostadius, Calvin, Beza, &c. how strong soever they imagined their faith to be; were destitute of signs and extraordinary graces: nor were they renowned, even for humility, temperance, chastity and the like necessary virtues. And whereas the Catholic reformers, in every age and nation; met with contradictions and fierce persecutions; because they strove to raise sensual and corrupt Christians from vice to virtue; those whom Luther and his associates reformed, applauded their reformers, nor ever showed the least reluctance. This difference is a known fact, and is very worthy of remark.

Some presume even to censure all voluntary mortifications and penitential austerities, as unnatural and improper to atone for sin. But, ei-

R

ther

ther by accepting the crosses that are sent by providence; as Job, David, &c. did; or by chastising his body, as St. Paul; the sinner (and who is not such?) can not but please God his Saviour. For God certainly approves all justice: now if a sinner be moved by the grace of God, and with sincere contrition strives to prevent the divine justice, by voluntary chastisement in this life; his conduct must be pleasing and satisfactory or meritorious in the sight of God.

In union with the merits of Christ, St. Paul (Coloss. i. v. 24.) says that by his sufferings he supplies that, in which the passion of Christ is *wanting*. For although our Redeemer has merited an *infinite* ransom, he still requires that all his faithful members should assume their crosses, and by sufferings should become conformable to their Head; whom it behoved to suffer, and *so* to enter into his kingdom. And in this light, only, St. Paul could supply a certain deficiency, by his sufferings applied to, and accepted for, the Church, the mystical body or living members of Christ.

God, says the modern Free-thinker, is not pleased with the sufferings of his beloved children? No: nor even with those of Christ himself, if we abstract from the motive. But their
love

love of his Justice, which his pious children mean to satisfy by generously passing sentence upon themselves, is most acceptable to him. Nay, the living members of Christ, who without his divine influence could do nothing, can (like St. Paul) do all things, when they remain united with their omnipotent Head. Both the satisfactory and the meritorious works of the saints are referred to the prime and original efficacy of Christ; as the motion of each of our members proceeds originally from the head, and as each branch of the vine is influenced by the stock. Now in union with Christ's merits, the due performance of penitential works is referred to its primary and principal cause, is infallibly assured of the divine acceptance, becomes abundantly satisfactory for sin, and even acquires a super-eminent degree of merit.

In a word, the sinner, by each voluntary act of penance, evidences the sincerity of his wish to efface the stains of his conscience: and tho' his penitential efforts seem chiefly to affect the body, yet they move him who is able to cleanse the soul itself, to cancel its debts. As in the other external acts of religion: for instance, by kneeling we express the desire of a most humble submission and entire worship; and by external

R 2

ablution

ablution, that of purity from sin. These signs, moreover, are so naturally expressive of such effects, that they seem to have been used by all nations from time immemorial.

May not Luther's *reformation* be regarded, like that of some religious orders, as a revival of the severity of ancient discipline?

No. The writings of the very first pretended Reformers, as Bossuet has shown, prove the contrary. Their main aim was, to reform the Catholic faith; by teaching a new *method* of justification without good works. They declaimed indeed loudly against some less important abuses, in indulgences, pilgrimages and the like. But their zeal for discipline consisted in empty words. This task appeared both laborious and inglorious: nor did they deign to use one finger to promote it. But, on the contrary, to sit down and discover from the profound doctrine of St. Paul, a *gratuitous justification*, independent either on penance or indulgence, hidden from all former ages: this appeared a truly Apostolic function, worthy of Luther, and of the utmost importance to all (hitherto deluded) Christians. From this principle, it should seem, Luther and his *consistory*
granted

granted to the Landgrave of Hesse that more than *plenary* indulgence, to wit, to take a second wife, provided (as the Landgrave had promised, he would still take up his cross, by supporting his first wife.

Yet, how agreeable soever this new system of reformation appeared to corrupt humanity, the frequent sign of the cross seemed its tacit condemnation. For this had always served to admonish the faithful of the necessity, of crucifying the flesh with its lusts, (See Gal. v.) and of bearing their crosses after Christ. This rub was therefore to be removed. And the genius of the Reformation resolved, in order to banish the cross, to inveigh against an imaginary peril of idolatry. By this stratagem was "the scandal" of the cross made void." Gal. v. v. 15. While, at the same time, they pretended to extend the glory of our Saviour's passion; by excluding the merit of good works. For, since the passion of our Saviour, what Christian had ever discerned *scandalous blasphemy* against the infinite merits of his Redeemer, in this sentence: *Good works are necessary to salvation?* Yet this the Reformers, and even their moderator, Melancthon, at Worms, &c. in repeated synods condemned, as derogatory from the honour of our
divine

divine Redeemer. See Melancthon's ep. b. 1. And thus did Luther, pretending to reform, open a wide breach to a pernicious relaxation of Christian discipline, and authorize a visible corruption of manners.

Did not great numbers flock to this new Doctor of grace?

Without doubt. When Luther, who had been a Doctor of Divinity, resolved to prefer the popular profession of a Theological Empiric; and attended by Carlostadius, a man perfectly qualified for his mountebank, began to display his *gratuitous panacea* at Wittenberg; there is not the least reason to wonder that his new system of Reformation, leading downhill from the holy mountain of the Cross to the flowery vale of sensuality, seduced many. Erasmus (no rigid critic) eye-witness of the whole tragicomical scene, remarked: That the first Apostles left their wives, when they began to preach the gospel; whereas these new ones, on the contrary, left their vows and married: that this new doctrine consisted in smooth and flattering principles, "*Blanda dictu.*" See Erasmus, to the brethren of lower Germany.

In

In opposition to all the ancient canons, and the remaining discipline of the primitive Church, those Reformers, Lutherans, Sacramentarians, Anabaptists and the rest, relied on the following list of auxiliaries: 1. *Imputative Justification*, attainable by faith alone, and inamissible: of which chief auxiliary Luther boasted, as sufficient alone to reform the Church. 2. *Sensuality*, exempt from all obligation of fasting and abstinence: 3. *Concupiscence*, unbridled and freed from every canonical restraint. N. B. This experienced veteran had formerly succeeded in subduing both Sampson and Solomon; and had also proved the efficacy of Balaam's stratagem against the otherwise invincible army of Israel. This then, to some of the more expert Reformers, appeared more efficacious than even Luther's prime auxiliary, imputative justification. Fourth auxiliary: *Licentiousness*, under the mask of Gospel liberty: 5. *Avarice*, licenced to plunder religious houses: 6. *Blind zeal*, with *Fanaticism*, *Love of novelty*, *Self-sufficiency* and *Independence*.

Thus then, the measures being considered, we have less reason to be surprised at the numbers seduced from the Catholic Church, than at the sudden stop that was put to the rapid progress of such

such dissolute innovations. We thank God for this fresh proof of his protection. He has ever constantly circumscribed the most desperate heresies: and even when they threatened to lay waste his universal Church, he has commanded them to stop short in their career, and to dissipate their proud surges against her fundamental rock.

Does not the moral life of certain Separatists, whose generosity, humanity and candour are of late so highly extolled and applauded, suffice to characterize their orthodoxy, and to render them secure in point of faith?

By no means. The proof is palpably deficient. For, not to mention the plausible pretensions of some Socinians and Deists to the honour of very laudable conduct; even certain Pagans have been renowned for *singular and notable* morals. But salvation requires our submission both to the discipline and the doctrine of the true and visible Church, that is, to the whole of revelation. And the enemy of our salvation, well knowing the necessity of both faith and good works, is content to deprive us of either.

It

It is impossible to form a right judgment of the *one* true Church, merely from the conduct of some few orthodox or unorthodox Christians. We can not absolutely judge even of discipline, from the observance of a few individuals of any persuasion: but must appeal to the known canons, rules or laws prescribed and enforced by it. "We prove not faith from particular persons, but particular persons by their faith." Tertul. on Prescriptions, c. 3. If a Catholic, who admits the whole faith, is still deficient in moral practice: he must reflect on that sentence: "That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not *himself*, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke xii. v. 47.

The Catholic Church herself, however, never adulterates the word of God; never attempts to relax the strictness of the Gospel, or to accommodate its precepts to the corrupt maxims of the world. She continues to enjoin regular fasts, according to Apostolical tradition. Though some disobey, she never prevaricates. But the character of heresy is, independence on all authority. "If I should resolve to fast at all, I will fast on whatever day I choose, by my own choice, and with full liberty." Aerius, an heresiarch

fiarch of the fourth age, quoted by St. Epiphanius. St. Augustin also subjoins Acrius's pretence: "Lest he should seem to be under the law." B. to Quodvultus on heresy.

The Catholic Church obliges her children to confess their sins, and to make timely atonement for them by abstinence and works of penance. Separatists, on the contrary, neglect the confession of their sins; are habituated to palliate their transgressions, and to aim at appearing just, to gain the applause of men. They are also, of late, even so remote from all voluntary and penitential abstinence; that the opposite doctrine, daily echoed from all sides, seems to obtain, as a regular principle, to wit: Prudently to *enjoy* those goods which the God of nature provides. Is this the doctrine of the new testament?

Thus, while St. Paul was expounding the necessity of justice, or holiness and chastity, and the certainty of future judgment: Felix *being* terrified, answered: "For this time, go thy way: but when I have a convenient time I will send for thee." Acts xxiv. But when does the sensualist find a convenient time to sacrifice his momentary pleasures? Tomorrow: tomorrow: till death lifts the inevitable dart.

In

In general, as hell deters the Deist, so does mortification the Separatist, from being reconciled to the Catholic Church. But what Catholic ever changed his religion on his death-bed? The pale of the Church is not indeed a sufficient barrier against sins; and Catholics have too often reason to *reform* their lives: but of their faith they are always secure.

If any persuasion, *method*, or society, though visibly separate from the Catholic Church, both prescribes and practises the moral precepts of the Gospel, is it still necessary for such to unite with that one, true Catholic Church, of which they discern the clear marks?

It is essentially necessary. Purity and unity of faith is even the first requisite or principle of salvation. Without this, all pretence of plausible morality is vain; all imaginary fervour is mere enthusiasm. In point of faith, at least, we *must* hear the successors of the Apostles.

Though the good Samaritan was by our Saviour proposed to the orthodox Jews, as a pattern of charity: "Do thou in like manner:" Luke x. and though he spoke of the Samaritan leper; who, of the ten cleansed, alone returned

to thank his benefactor; as of an example of gratitude; he nevertheless directed the Samaritans to follow the faith of the Jews: "You
 " adore that which you know not (*desitute of*
 " *secure guidance*): we adore that which we
 " know; *for salvation is of the Jews.*" John
 iv. v. 22.

Never, in fine, were any Saints found, but such as either men saw visible members of the Catholic Church; or at least such as God saw within her pale, in the docile disposition of their hearts. St. Simeon, St. Ann, the B. Virgin, St. Joseph, St. John Baptist, &c. at the arrival of Christ, were all living among the Jews, and frequenting the Temple. This Temple was then become, *A den of thieves*. Did they apostatize? Nay our Saviour himself was seen constantly deferring to the authority of the Jewish ministry; and while he censured their manners, he authorized their doctrine.

Now, undoubtedly, Christ himself, " Hath
 " obtained a better *ministry*, by how much also
 " he is the mediator of a better *covenant*, which
 " is established on *better promises.*" Heb. viii. v.
 6. Wherefore, of his ministers he says: " He
 " that heareth you, heareth me." Luke x. v. 16.
 And hence it is clear, that to *hear*, that is to
 obey

obey, the true Church alone, is a *fundamental* tenet, and an essential duty of every Christian.

CHAPTER III.

UNNERRING OR INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

WHAT do you understand by the Infallibility of the Church?

I understand, according to the promises of our Saviour: that the Catholic Ministry presiding over his universal and visible Church, legitimately and evidently succeeding to those Apostles on whom he visibly sent his thrice holy Spirit, is, by his care and providence, preserved from every error in point of faith, through all ages even to the consummation of the world.

Did our Saviour assign a visible depositary, where his genuine faith and whole religion might infallibly be found; that is: Did he establish a ministry, with whom he deposited the

S

un-

unerring interpretation of the divine scriptures, the final determination of all disputes, and the legitimate dispensation of his salutary sacraments?

He certainly did. To this purpose he referred us to the Apostles and their lawful successors: with whom he remains to the end. This is the Catholic hierarchy, which the Son of God endued with his Spirit, and empowered to absolve from sin, in his name, and to teach, establish and rule his universal Church. This Church was soon spread over the whole world, and still remains, inviolably united in the strictest union of faith: One communion, founded by miracles, and miraculously preserved; existing ever since the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, forming one uninterrupted, conspicuous, numerous, uniform and holy series of orthodox Christians; from father to son, through every age, guarding the divine deposit of faith with most scrupulous attention; and cutting off, by divine authority, all religious communication with heretical innovators, or with such as "refuse to hear the Church." Matt. xviii. For, "what fellowship hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. c. vi.

When

When the Catholic Church defines an essential article, to be believed by all, under pain of excommunication, is that canonical decision infallible?

Yes. Because we read: "The Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the truth." Timothy iii. v. 15. "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. "I am with you all days." Matt. xxviii. The Holy Ghost likewise remains with the Church, to lead her into all truth. See John xiv. and xvi. Whoever refuses to obey the Church, is to be excommunicated, or to be regarded "as the heathen and the publican." Matt. xviii. v. 17. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me." Luke x. And St. John gives this general rule, for the trying of Spirits: "He that knoweth God, *heareth us*: he that is not of God, *heareth us not*: by this we know the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error;" 1 Ep. c. iv. v. 6.

Had our Saviour said: I will not build my Church upon a rock: Thou, Simon, shalt never be called Peter, or the fundamental rock: The stormy powers of hell shall at last prevail against my Church, and Peter's faith shall fail; I will

not remain with you to the end : He who heareth you, heareth me not : My Church shall not be, the pillar and foundation of truth : from such negations we should consequently infer, that the Church must be fallible ; and that, like Luther, we are all left to judge for ourselves. But since the contrary affirmations are true, we must also draw a contrary conclusion.

Nay, doctrinal infallibility being so clearly essential to our faith, we find that Christ's perpetual protection, to this purpose, was repeatedly promised and ascertained by him to his Church, on the most solemn occasions and in the most striking circumstances : as, when Simon, raised above the sentiments of flesh and blood, *first* confessed his Lord's Divinity. 2dly, When Christ had instituted the great sacrament of union ; but bequeathed to his Church the Spirit of truth and concord ; and, by his prayer to his Father, had obtained the perpetual union of his whole flock. 3dly. When he was just going to withdraw his visible presence, and to return to his Father : when he said, " Behold (*though visibly I depart, yet invisibly*) I am with you, " all days." Matt. xxviii.

Finally, our Saviour promised to his Church two special favours : The sending of the Spirit
of

of Truth upon her, and his own perpetual continuance with her, to the end. And as it was customary for the Prophets to give some sign; or to foretel some less distant event; in order, by such *Prophetic signs*, to seal and confirm the belief of those prophecies which were to happen afterwards, or even in distant ages: in this view, our Saviour *visibly* fulfilled his first promise, by sending the Holy Ghost; that we might rely on his second and most important promise, of remaining with his Church, "*all days, even to the consummation of the world.*" Matt. xxviii. For he was wont to confirm the most important points of his revelation, by such signs: as, when he foretold his coming to judge the world, at the end of time: He gave a sort of *Prophetic sign*; by foretelling his transfiguration, and the approaching ruin of Jerusalem: and adding; That some there present, or of that generation, should not taste death, till they had seen those previous predictions accomplished. See Matt. xvi. and xxiv.

Show the immutability and infallibility of the Catholic Church, from the doctrine of the holy Fathers.

No point is more obvious in their writings. "The rule of faith is simply *one*, alone immovable and *unreformatable*." Tert. 1. de vel. virg. "In the very Catholic Church great care is to be taken, that we hold that which has been believed, *universally, always, and by all*." St. Vincent of Lerins. "I should not believe the Gospel itself, if the authority of the Catholic Church did not move me to believe it." St. Aug. con. ep. Fundam. This is conclusive. Again, "I am fixed in the Catholic Church, by the succession of her Prelates, from the time that Peter the Apostle, to whom our Lord after his resurrection recommended to feed his *sheep*, occupied the chair; down to the very Bishop, who now fills the said chair." Idem, ibidem. "It is most absurd to dispute whether that is to be observed, which the universal Church observes." Idem ep. 118. "To refuse supreme authority to the Church, is certainly either extreme impiety or headlong arrogance." Idem de util. cred. c. 17.

Tertullian, St. Irenæus, St. Augustin, &c. alleged the indeficient succession of Catholic Pastors, especially in the Roman See, for 2, 3, or 4 ages only, as sufficient to fix their faith.

What

What an additional proof, then, has our faith acquired; since we see this *House of God*, founded on the Rock, proof against all storms; attacked for 17 centuries, yet found invincible? While successive heresies, "As grass on the tops of houses, which withereth before it be plucked up;" Ps. cxxviii. all dwindle away, of their own accord, even as they sprung up.

Has not the Catholic Church varied her doctrine, since the time of those holy Fathers?

No. Otherwise all faith must have perished. But as St. Augustin says, that "The Christian faith, and the Catholic Church have never varied." Lib. 1. con. Julian. c. 6. v. 63. So the learned and candid Bossuet, in his Preface to his celebrated "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches," offers to efface his whole history, if the Protestants can show only one Variation in the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Yet, to make way for the Reformation of England, it was grossly pretended: "That *whole Christendom* had been drowned in abominable idolatry, for 800 years and more." Homily. As if they had said: Idolatry *must* have begun, from

from *about* the time when St. Augustin and his fellow Missionaries converted our Saxon Ancestors from paganism : though the precise epoch of Popish idolatry ; its first Author ; whence the Popish sect apostatized ; or what disturbance was occasioned by the innovation ; we can by no means determine. And whereas formerly, the solidly learned St. J. Damascen refuted the Iconoclasts, Or. 1. de cult. im. from this principle : The Church is infallible ; therefore could never fall into idolatry : these innovating reformers, on the reverse, proceeded thus : The Church (we *must* be persuaded) is fallen into idolatry ; therefore, not infallible.

Does natural reason, as well as authority, tend to demonstrate the infallibility of the Apostolic Church?

Undoubtedly : Either there is on earth an infallible guidance, to determine the orthodox faith and to interpret the true sense of the scriptures ; or there is not ? If there is, The Catholic Church is that guide, and must be infallible in her canonical decisions. If not : faith is abandoned to instability ; and each Christian is left at full liberty, in reading the scriptural texts,

to follow the presumptive *soundness* of his private judgment, in an affair of this importance, to wit, in adopting a system of faith. For thus Locke and others did. He may, therefore, join in with Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Socinus, Hobbes, Spinoza, Voltaire, Rousseau, &c. or, as Luther did, he may stand alone; if his *sound* judgment, or his presumption be pleased. His right is not inferior to Luther's. He may therefore, by supposed metaphors, catachreses and various subtle quibbles, explain away the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and every other truth revealed in scripture, if above his comprehension, without fearing the censure of any Reformer, who shall reason consistently with his own principles. Nay more, if from his sound judgment he denies that the sacred text is transmitted to us uncorrupted even in *essentials*; he must be left in his persuasion. For it must be owned that it was, apparently and humanly speaking, more easy for such essential errors, especially before the invention of printing, to glide into the successive manuscripts of scripture alone; than also into that Law of Christ which is written in uniform characters, not with ink, but by the Spirit of Truth; not on vellum, but on living tablets, on the hearts of all Christians

stians in the communion of the Catholic Church, down from the very Apostolic age; maintained by their uninterrupted and practical profession, and inviolably preserved by the settled and lasting liturgies and rituals, used in the Catholic Church from age to age.

Ought we not also from the fatal experience of the mouldering Reformation, to infer the necessity of acquiescing in the infallible authority of the Catholic Church?

We ought. Unless we resolve to prefer liberty of thinking, and endless seeking, to that settled and full assent, which alone is properly *called* faith. We have waited two whole ages for a direct solution of this plain argument: Either the Original Church received from Christ infallibility, or she did not: if she did, the whole Reformation, forged by Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth age, was needless and absurd; if not, there is neither Church, nor certain faith on earth. Never did either Catholics, Deists, or Noncormists receive even the shadow of a probable answer to this alternative. It has, like a dart, pierced the very heart of the Reformation.

How

How long shall it be said: I am of Whitfield, I of Fox, I of Calvin, of Zuinglius, or Luther? "Is Christ divided?" 1 Cor. c. i. Did he establish his Church on many rocks?

The Catholic Church nevertheless maintains her ancient and regular course: and her faith is found invariably the same now, as when she first converted England. Because she has constantly retained the free use of her Apostolic authority: Subduing "every height that exalteth itself" "against the knowledge of God, and bringing" "into captivity every understanding (*sound judgment*) to the obedience of Christ, and" "having in a readiness (*empowered*) to revenge" "all disobedience." 2 Cor. c. x. v. 5, and 6.

How different this, from the tottering system of the Reformation! Whenever a reformed Doctor is urged to point out some fixed and certain rule of faith, he is inextricably embarrassed, and unable to evade this alternative: If he refers his pupil to his own *sound judgment*, the only guide confirmed by parliamentary authority, he foresees a miserable and motley creed about to ensue: If he dictates the peculiar opinion which actually prevails in his own mind; the candidate has a right to demand a proof of his authority. His *credentials* must be *previously produced*.

produced. "How can they preach, unless they
 "be sent?" Rom. x. v. 15. The scripture, he
 may say, is clear. If so, the Doctor's comments
 are clearly preposterous and needless. Especially
 since he himself may possibly, and perhaps
 to-morrow, reform and vary his present system,
 on a fresh perusal of the written Law.

Did not even Luther, when Carlostadius and
 his followers were seen to encroach on *his pa-*
triarchate, upbraid them with this want of mis-
 sion? "They ran, (*said Luther*) *of their own*
accord, though I did not send them." From Je-
 rem. xxiii. v. 21. He adds, "That before the
 "Pope, indeed, he can defend them; but not
 "before the Devil: and that, at their Death,
 "they shall be cast headlong into hell." See
 Luther's *serm. on the duty of a Christian*, tom. 7.
 Whitfield's style was not more horribly sub-
 lime.

You must, in fine, either produce *ordinary*
 Apostolic mission, or prove your *extraordinary*
 commission, by Miracles. "Had Novatian the
 "gift of tongues? Did he prophesy? Was he
 "able to raise the dead? He should have pos-
 "sessed some of these powers, to pretend to in-
 "troduce a gospel of new right." St. Pacian,
 ep. to Sympron. Erasmus, in like manner,
 rallying

rallying the new reforming Gospellers, objects:
That he never knew one of theirs able to cure
even a lame horse,

Infallibility seems, indeed, essentially necessary. But the great difficulty still remains: *How* can *men* be infallibly guided, or *how* can the mysteries, proposed by the Church, be rendered credible?

The Church is infallibly guided, by the perpetual assistance of the Spirit of Truth. God created this visible universe, and still preserves it, as the Temple of his worship and glory. Shall we then doubt of his preserving his Church herself from the inroads of such errors, as would corrupt his worship and frustrate the great end of his creation?

With respect, however, to the credibility of all mysteries of faith, we are to inform ourselves, only of the Truth, or *Fact* in question: *Hath God spoken?* And hath he declared his Church the infallible depositary of his revealed truths? If so: we must silence the cavillings of human reason. For though, in point of intuition, we find each mystery obscure: yet, in point of ex-

T

istence,

istence, we find sufficient evidences to oblige us to believe its reality.

In all mysteries, the *How* and *Why*? The manner, and the necessity, motive or reason of such divine objects and operations, belong to God, the Supreme Being and *Prime Agent*. And such presumptuous inquiry is too often a fatal rock to faith. Hence St. Gregory: "It is the most extravagant madness, to pry into the reason of God's conduct." b. 9. Moral. Hence, as St. J. Chryf. and others observe, when Zachary said, "Whereby shall I know this?" Luke i. he was reprimanded, for anywise demurring, or demanding even a prophetic sign, after sufficient evidence of the divine promise: to wit, that he should be father of the Messiah's precursor. Hence also the Capharnaites, who presumptuously asked; "How can this *man* give us his flesh to eat?" forfeited the gift of faith, by their presumption. John vi. Though they probably would never have dared, as of late many have, to call omnipotence in question: or to say, *How* can God incarnate give us his flesh to eat?

This preposterous manner of inquiring into the divine mysteries, by *How*, is perfectly exposed

fed in the third c. of St. John: from v. 2. we learn that Nicodemus and other Pharisees, on account of Christ's miracles, were convinced of this important *fact*: *His divine mission*. Then, v. 3. our Saviour reveals to Nicodemus the necessity of baptismal regeneration. v. 4. Nicodemus, amazed at the incomprehensible mystery, inquires, *how* it can be; and mistakes it. Jesus v. 5. and seq. omitting the *how*, insists on the reality or fact. Moreover, v. 6. having distinguished carnal from spiritual generation, Christ deigns to employ a simile v. 7, and 8. in order to convince Nicodemus that in the works of nature, as in those of the Holy Ghost, human reason is often bewildered: as he there instances in the wind (*πνευμα*): since its origin and tendency are, to us, unaccountable. We should not therefore wonder at the incomprehensibility of spiritual regeneration. Nicodemus however, v. 9. remarks that the *how* which he wished to comprehend, remains still unanswered. Our Saviour, v. 10. reminding him of his ignorance and insufficiency, proceeds, v. 11. to insist, more solemnly, on the *infallible* certainty of the *fact* (to himself and his Holy Spirit, visible; though unintelligible to Nicodemus): "We speak
" what we know." &c. In fine, v. 12. Jesus

Christ exposes the presumption of human reason; since we pretend to discern *how* the Almighty Spirit operates, and yet know not the whole of natural and sensible objects: "If I have (*condescending to human capacity by similitudes*) spoken to you *earthly things*, and you believe not: how will you believe, if I shall speak to you (*nakedly*) *heavenly things*?" He then tacitly refers to his future ascension, v. 18. See St. Chrys. Homil. 26, 27. in Joan.

Can we, however, proceed more rationally than by examining how each mystery can be possible?

Yes. Respecting each mystery, the true believer thus proceeds: If God hath said it, how incomprehensible soever it be, I believe it. But the infidel, thus: I see not *how* it can be, it is therefore incredible, or impossible; and therefore, either God never did say it, or his meaning was allegorical, catachrestical, &c.

Nay, to go to the very origin of fatal presumption, we find the infernal Serpent thus insinuating his venom: "*Why* hath God commanded you,?" Gen. iii. As if he had said: Since

Since ye discern no plausible reason for this prohibition, *why* do ye thus childishly obey? Why are ye not more clear-sighted? Why then thus created *Rational Beings*? Hence we are taught, from woful experience, to avoid this arrogant appeal, from divine authority (by *how* and *why*?) to human intelligence.

In philosophy, it is true, we may require arguments proceeding from demonstrated principles: but historical truths are known, only from sufficient testimony, which affords moral certainty, and is the pillar of commercial and social life. Faith, moreover, is grounded on a certain coherence or concatenation of historical facts and irrefragable evidences; which constitute the preparatory motives; and then the divine grace or gift of faith renders us submissive to each mystery not indeed by showing us *how* it is performed but by inducing us to assent, most freely and fully, to whatever the Catholic Church proposes; as infallibly proceeding from divine revelation, authentically notified to us, and sealed by divine authority. Thus, our faith being consummated, we believe: because we are assured by the Church, that *God hath said it*. Hence also our faith is truly divine; and is, in reality, The Gift of God.

Shall we refuse to believe a revealed mystery, or a miracle, till we so thoroughly conceive the manner of the divine operation, as to think we could have done the like ourselves? Would you, before you believe, pretend to comprehend, *how* God exists and operates? In vain might you inquire, not only, *how* God can be, without a beginning, eternal? *How* whole and entire in every spot of the universe? *How* one and three? &c. But even, *How* is the soul united to the body? *How* does it feel pleasure, or pain, respectively as the body is affected? *How* can it communicate motion to the whole bodily frame? *How* can a simple act of the will be instantaneously obeyed, and so many nerves, muscles, and tendons be put in motion; even before the intellect, were it able, has time to reflect on the measures proper to produce such an effect? Does not this union of body and soul render man a mystery to himself? *How* are objects, so numerous and distant, painted on the retina? *How* is thought formed? And so on.

But no wonder that, since the Author of all is himself to us, "A hidden God," Is. xlv. several of his works should seem unintelligible. Show *how* Creation was effected, before you pretend to comprehend the whole nature of things

things created. Till then, even the whole creation must remain a mystery to man: and the vain pretensions of all ancient and modern Gnostics must certainly be exploded.

Let us rather strive to think more frequently of God; let us read the divine scriptures with greater humility and diffidence, sensible of our weakness; let us contemplate the nature, energy and ineffable attributes of *Almighty God*, with greater awe, with filial affection, and with a sincere desire of attaining to the truth. Let us reflect also on the clear evidences of scripture, tradition and reason, altogether demonstrative of the infallible authority of the Church: then shall we be better disposed to believe all the revealed mysteries of faith.

God, to give us some notion of his infinite perfection, says; "I am, *who am*." Exod. iii. "All nations are before him, as if they had no being at all, as nothing and vanity." Is. xl. The Creator can perform infinitely more than we creatures can conceive, All things are possible to him, if they imply no contradiction. This contradiction must consist in two known terms, evidently excluding each other; and must refer to things homogeneous, of the same order, or within the same sphere; as, *The Sun is risen,*

risen, and *The Sun is not risen*. But, on the contrary we see no contradiction in these terms; God is one, *in nature*; and he is three, *in personality*. The *divine nature* and *personality* are above the sphere of our comprehension. We only see, that the two distinct terms, or predicates, must indicate a real distinction of two subjects, i. e. of *nature* and *person*. In like manner, it is truly impossible, *on earth* and *naturally*, for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle: yet this, how impossible soever in our eyes, is most feasible before God; because he acts in an infinitely higher sphere. And finally, the Church is *naturally* fallible, but Christ promised to render it *supernaturally* infallible. The Supreme reason, in a word, is not to be measured by our circumscribed faculties.

Shall we then, vile worms that thus crawl on this earth, unable to define the *substance* of a grain of sand, refuse to submit to the divine authority; which assures us that God's perpetual presence with *his* Church renders her doctrine infallible; (and consequently, that the divine mysteries are really what she constantly believes them to be) merely because we can not comprehend *how* God can maintain this infallible guidance?

guidance? Absurd presumption! This, at least, is clear: that as a moral certainty of revelation is necessary, to excite our lively belief of supernatural truths: so is an infallible authority, to reject falsity and to propose to us such things only, as have been revealed.

Are we obliged to believe that the Pope, if alone, is infallible; or only, that he is, under Christ, the visible head of the Church?

We are not obliged to believe him infallible. The French, who hold him fallible, are Catholics. The Church never declared him infallible. What all Catholics must believe, is, that every true and lawful successor of St. Peter (in the See of Rome, as regularly hitherto) is supreme head over all other Catholic Bishops; as each Bishop is head over all the priests of his particular diocese.

All Catholics are also taught, that when the Pope presides as head over an universal assembly of Catholic Bishops and Doctors; so as to represent the whole Catholic Church; in this case, whatever is defined by the consent of the Pope and the major part of the Bishops, is agreeable to scripture and tradition, and is the Catholic

tholic belief of all preceding ages. Now every point of faith, thus ratified, must by every Catholic be deemed infallible. But King Henry VIII. the first, and monstrous, head of the English Church, did not proceed so reasonably: "They were *unadvised Blasphemers*, who raised King Henry VIII. so high, as to style him, "*Head of the Church.*" Calvin, on Amos 6.

The learned Protestant Bishop Beveridge justly observes, that in point of Episcopal subordination, the Church has always regulated each See, according to the civil rank and precedence which each city and metropolis had, previously to its conversion, already attained. Now Rome, in the Apostles time, was incontestably the metropolis of the Roman empire, and head of the world: and the same providence, which had dilated that empire to such incredible amplitude, destined the chief of the Apostles to be the first Bishop of the said metropolis, or prime city of the universe. These historical facts themselves, were tradition otherwise silent, sufficiently attest the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome,

But, not to appeal to Melancthon, Grotius and other more moderate Reformers, who are known to have written favourably of the Pope's supremacy over all other Bishops; the Arch-founder himself

himself of the Reformation surely deserves attention: "I do not deny, that the Bishop of Rome is, *has been, and ought to be, the Primate of all.* I believe that he is above all other Bishops, nor is it lawful to deny his supremacy." Luther, in respons. e 13. proposit. e.

Are the proofs of the Pope's supremacy so convincing?

They are; whether we consult Reason, scripture, or tradition. Reason dictates the propriety and necessity of a centre of union, to terminate all doubts and disputes relative to Religion. Then scripture also confirms what reason dictates. For our Saviour, the wise Architect, about to build his Church, chose Peter for its fundamental rock. Peter, after our Lord's ascension, appears always at the head of the Apostolical College.

The promises of Christ to Peter, and the acts of the Apostles, place the supremacy of the Prince of the Apostles in the most evident point of view. Christ appointing Peter his future and visible Substitute, said to him: "Thou art *Peter*; (that is, a rock) and upon this *Rock* I will build my Church." Matt. xvi. Then, actually

actually conferring on him the supremacy, Christ said to Peter: " Lovest thou me?—Feed my sheep:" that is, Be thou my Pastor; not over my lambs only, but even over my sheep; Be Pastor of Pastors. John xxi. v. 17. Nay, to Peter it was said: " Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you (*all the twelve*) that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith (*in particular*) fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Luke xxii. The Evangelists observe no fixed order in naming the other Apostles; yet Peter is constantly placed first. Peter, as their chief and representative, every where answers in the name of all the Apostles. And after Judas's fall, Peter, Acts i. absolutely moves and directs the whole assembly; pronouncing, that a successor, to fill that vacant Apostleship is, agreeably to the prophetic scripture, even necessary. Again, Christ promised to Peter, in particular, the keys of his Kingdom; and so evidently and repeatedly signalized this Apostle, that we are not surprised at the visible deference of the rest to Peter. But, to prevent their jealousy, our Saviour said: " He that is *the greater* among you, let him be as the younger (*or minor*);

"nor); and he that is the Leader, as, &c."

Luke xxii. v. 26. Where our Lord not only expresses a Leader or *Chief*, but also regulates his conduct by the precept of humility. Now if a head was, by our Lord, placed over the Apostles themselves, who were all to be infallibly guided by the Spirit of truth; how much more necessary was it after the decease of the Apostles; when every Bishop, as it was too evident, was not infallibly guided?

Of the Church of Rome St. Paul says:
 "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world."
 Rom. i. v. 8. And after the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, not only St. Ignatius of Antioch, in his epistle, extols that Church, but likewise in all the histories and other writings of the primitive Fathers, we find the See of Rome constantly regarded as of the highest importance and unquestionable pre-eminence; and the Church of Rome styled by the Councils: The Mother and Head of all other Churches. "Dioscorus
 "presumed, without the authority of the *Apostolic*
 "*See*, to convene a Council; a thing un-
 "heard of." Council of Chalcedon, an. 451.
 "Out of the twelve one is chosen, that a head
 "being established, the danger of schism might
 "be prevented." St. Hierom. b. 1. against Jo-

vin. c. 14. "To this Church (*of Rome*) on
 "account of its more powerful superiority,
 "every other Church must conform — By
 "means of which (*See of Peter*) the Apostolic
 "tradition has always been preserved by the rest
 "of Christendom." St. Irenæus, b. 3. against
 heresies. "Thou art Peter—Where, there-
 "fore, Peter is, there is the Church; where the
 "Church, there no death;—nor shall the gates
 "of hell prevail." St. Ambrose, in ps. 40. The
 primitive Fathers unanimously indicate the
 throne of Peter, or the See of Rome, as the
 Pharos of faith: and till the Separatists discover
 a preferable Paragon or leading See; to Rome
 (not to Wittenburg) the whole Catholic Church
 must, and will adhere.

We might cite all the ecclesiastical Historians
 and holy Fathers, up to the Apostolic age, ac-
 knowledging the supremacy of the Roman See.
 But the more erudite Protestants own that the
 Fathers deferred to the See of Peter. "The
 "right of convoking a General Council be-
 "longs to the Pope." Melancthon, b. 4. (p.
 196. He likewise esteemed the Episcopal hier-
 archy, as uniting all the Pastors under one head,
 so necessary to maintain unity of faith among the
 various nations, "that were it not already, it
 "ought

"ought to be established." See Melancthon's answer to Card. Bellarm. Certainly, were all Bishops independent on this supreme head, and each at liberty to teach what he might choose, the Church would soon become; not the beautiful Body of Christ, composed of members all well proportioned, coherent and uniform; as St. Paul describes it; but a monstrous assemblage of disjointed dioceses, under the dishonoured name of the Christian Church.

Has each individual Lutheran an irrevocable privilege, empowering him to choose his own faith?

This was claimed in Luther's time. But the more sober Doctors of our English reformation regard it as absurd. We must however confess that we never yet could find what satisfactory answer these could give to the Dissenters, on this head. A Cobler even, provided he be a man of *sound* judgment, reading all the sublime mysteries revealed in holy writ, is, according to the very spirit and fundamental rule of the Reformation, not only more infallible than the Pope, but even equals the most venerable assembly of all the Catholic Bishops. Who shall dare

U 2 question

question the *soundness* of his judgment? It is therefore uncontrollable. He is authorized, both by Luther's precedent, and by Q. Elizabeth's 39 canons of English Faith, to stretch, cut, fashion and fit the awful word of God, at pleasure; as freely as he does a piece of vile leather. Doctors may recur to that *essential* Tradition, which their predecessors strove by *all means* to explode: but the Cocker's judgment is too *sound* to be so grossly imposed upon.

What is the natural consequence of thus referring each man to his own private judgment, for the determination of his faith?

Endless error. Simon Magus, Marcion, Manes, Sabellius, Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Pelagius, Mahomet, Socinus and the rest were all guided by private judgment. Melancthon, foreboding those fatal consequences of the Reformation, which time has too visibly shown, exclaimed: "Good God! What tragical scenes shall posterity behold, if they one day come to discuss these questions: Is the Word, is the Holy Ghost, a Person?" Book 4. ep. 228. Yet, be the consequences what they will, the Sons of Babel having rashly begun, were too proud

proud to desist. Though, it is apparent, their primary intention was not absolutely to rebel against the united authority of the Catholic Church. For Luther himself offered to desist, if his antagonist were also compelled to be quiet. But, "Touch the (*proud*) mountains, " and they shall smoke." Ps. cxliii. v. 5. Luther therefore seeing the whole Church on every side fulminating against his darling tenets, resolved, at all events, to maintain his innovations.

He then began to asperse and calumniate the Church, the Spouse of Christ. Who does not see, however, that Luther and Zuinglius, like the two flagitious Elders of Babylon, having lodged a false protest against the faithful and spotless Spouse of their Lord, are detected even from their own untenable charges? For if the Church, *the Daughter of Judah*, has violated her fidelity: "Tell me under what tree?" Dan. xiii. Under whose name? Name the fatal Author; and date the origin of this holy Susanna's fall, as we do that of every heretical Daughter of Israel. Where shall you limit the duration of her fidelity? At the end of the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, &c. age of Christianity? To the end of what century were we commanded,

To hear the Church? Agree, first, among yourselves, if you can. May not the Church expostulate with Luther: "Render what I gave thee (*baptism*); and be, if thou canst, otherwise a Christian." St. Hierom against Lucif. t. 2. c. 9. "Say, has the Church failed, or has she not? If she had already failed, whence proceeded Donatus? But if &c." St. Aug. b. 2. against Gaud. t. 7. c. 8. "Themselves falling off, they pretended that I (*the Church*) had fallen." Idem Conc. 2. in pl. 101. Their calumny, however, is so glaring, that a mere child may confute it, as Daniel justified Susanna. Thus Luther says; "Nor do I care for what Ambrose, Austin, the Councils, or the practice of ages may declare—I know their opinions so well, that I have declared against them." Luth. against the King of England, t. 2. fol. 347. May we not then, with less presumption, declare against Luther's opinions? "Austin, says Luther, was immersed in the *carnal sense* of the scripture." Luther, though boasting his discovery of the pure spirit of St. Paul, contracted (certainly not according to St. Paul's doctrine) a marriage doubly sacrilegious. Luther in fine pretends that the whole Church has

has erred: and shall we believe himself alone infallible?

Have such Reformers ever claimed infallibility?

They have often affected it: seeing that without this substantial authority, their new Church were a mere shadow. But how shall they re-establish that very fundamental rock, which themselves, to found the Reformation, laboured so much to do away? Here is, and ever must remain, the fatal rub.

Private judgment is too fickle to support divine faith: and it must be inconsistent, to remain separate from the one, original and unfailing Church, and yet to recur to her infallible authority. Wherefore, whenever they attempt to give an exposition of their faith, this alternative is so evident, that their perplexity becomes visible. And hence, this acephalous body is dismembered without end: hence this Sycamore has luxuriously branched into such monstrous ramifications. The real and practical rule of their faith, being; To believe just what squares with each man's private opinion, or human prejudices. Each fanatic, therefore, full of enthusiasm

enthusiasm for his favourite set of religious ideas, seems to discover the bewitching phantom of his peculiar error, in every sacred page.

Hence, as we see, the Lutheran denies *transubstantiation*; the Calvinist *the real presence*; the Socinian *consubstantiality*; the Deist *revelation*; the Materialist *the spirituality and immortality of the soul*; the Atheist *creation*: not to add other innumerable branches from Luther's fruitful stock. And the Sceptic brings up the rear of Babel's tribes.

In a word, either Catholicism alone, or Pyrrhonism is consistent; for in point of Religion, we must admit *all, or none*. "Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak *the same thing*, and that there be no schisms among you." 1 Cor. c. i.

Why is it so fatal to reject the infallibility of the Catholic Church?

Because the Truth is so essentially *one and indivisible*, that we can not break a single link of the Catholic Faith, without destroying the whole chain. And experience confirms the same: for among those who are destitute of infallibility,

fallibility, we daily see one sect rejecting what another approves.

“ Prove to me to day, that I am obliged in
 “ matters of faith to submit to the decisions of
 “ any men whatever; and tomorrow I will be-
 “ come a *Catholic*; and every man who shall
 “ act consistently and uprightly will pursue
 “ this course.” J. J. Rousseau. But, alas; his
 Calvinistical education, seconded by philosophi-
 cal self-sufficiency, had rendered him too pre-
 sumptuous to submit his reason to aught less
 than complete demonstration; and to expect
 this in matters of faith, is most unreasonable.

Philosophy, however, thus venturing to pur-
 sue Luther's principles, through the whole dark
 recess, *at which they point*, has made it indispu-
 table: That if the one, original and perpetual
 Catholic Church is liable to err in faith; there
 can be no true faith found on earth. Whence it
 follows, that whoever would be consistent, must
 become either a *Catholic*, or (at last) a *Sceptic*.

The same reason which, disdaining authority,
 rejects the true Body of our Lord from his ado-
 rable sacrament; will, with *at least* equal facility,
 reject his Divinity from the *reciprocal* mystery of
 his Incarnation: and with Spinoza, will explain
 away the whole scripture,

Thus

Thus hath the Reformation introduced that monster proscribed by St. Paul: "If the whole body were the eye: where would be the hearing?" 1 Cor. c. xii. v. 17, &c. She has licensed her whole congregation to judge of the scriptures; and no one is left, *to hear the Church.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE RULE OF CATHOLIC FAITH.

WHAT is the general Rule of faith prescribed to all Catholics?

It is, simply, To hear the Church. For since all the true disciples of Jesus Christ must be simple as doves, must become like little children; and, as St. Paul expresses it; if they seem to themselves wise in this world, must become even *fools* (according to their former notions), in order to receive the elements of true Wisdom: it is clear that our Saviour did not prescribe any such rule of faith, as might require the efforts either of genius, or philosophy. He showed

showed no such partiality in favour of our respective proficiency in literature; on the contrary, he constantly declared and evidenced even a special regard and attention for the poor, humble, illiterate and simple.

Agreeably, therefore, to the above principles, the invariable rule of Catholic faith is: To believe whatever the Catholic Church teaches; Or, in other words, to believe that "which has been believed in all ages, in all nations, and by all." St. Vincent of Lerins. This is truly the Catholic faith. This, and only this, is believed with divine faith.

The acts of our first Catholic and Apostolic Council are prefaced in these authoritative terms; "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," &c. Acts xv. v. 28. And in consequence of that Council, SS. Paul and Silas, notwithstanding whatever their natural genius might have suggested against the restrictions there decreed: "As they passed through the cities,—delivered to them the decrees—decreed by the Apostles and Ancients." Acts xvi. v. 4.

In short, if we would retain a solid and consistent rule of faith, and such as may prevent us from ever sliding into that logical prevarication which

which is called *the vicious circle*; we must remember, and have constantly in view, the *well established* authority of the original Church. From this *principle*, we must necessarily proceed, to deduce and evince the authenticity of scripture, and every other dogma. All rests on this divine foundation of the Church, *established* by the Almighty, and *therefore* infallible: “Behold
 “ the temple of Jerusalem: God hath destroyed
 “ it; have men been ever able to rebuild it?
 “ Behold the Christian Church: God hath built
 “ it; have men, conspiring against it, been able
 “ to destroy it?” St. Chrysost. Oration against the Jews.

The faithful must indeed believe what the Church proposes, and declares to have been revealed: but is the Catholic Ministry, or the Catholic Church herself in her consultations and canonical decisions, directed to the discovery of the true faith, by a more sure rule, than that of any national Church, derived from Luther's Reformation?

To come to an impartial decision of this important and critical point, let the controversy be thus fairly stated. The rule by which the Catholic

Catholic Church decides and defines, is; *The revealed Word of God*. Whether this be deposited in Scripture or Tradition, is immaterial. The reformed rule, if it may be termed *a rule*, is; The Scripture alone, as understood by any man of *sound judgment*. See the 39 Articles.

The German Reformers, at first, rejected Tradition: afterwards, finding that they could not prove the infallible authenticity of Scripture, without traditional authority, they endeavoured to reclaim its support. Yet this attempt served only to expose the inconsistency of their reforming project.

The whole controversy, however, is by obvious analysis reduced to this sole question: Whether private judgment, or the sense of the whole Catholic Church is more adequate to the determination of all revealed truths?

The Catholic rule of faith is of itself sufficiently conspicuous, and is also authorised by all antiquity. We need therefore only to subjoin here, a specimen of the innovating spirit that introduced and regulated the very original plan of this pretended Reformation. "Were a general Council to permit Priests to marry, it would then be a signal mark of piety and holiness,—(to commit what St. Paul forbids to be

“*even named among Christians*)—I would, in
 “ that case, forbid Priests to marry, under pain
 “ of damnation.” Luther, t. 2. Germ. fol. 214.
 Again, “ Should a Council ordain communion
 “ under both kinds; in contempt of the Coun-
 “ cil, I would receive one kind only, or nei-
 “ ther.” Idem, On the form of the mass. And,
 with the same invariable spirit of contradiction;
 “ If I retained the Elevation (*in Mass*) so long,
 “ it was only to *spite* Carlostadius; and if I ex-
 “ cluded it, this was to *spite* the Pope.” Idem,
 Little confession. Thus whimsical spite was
 the rule and guide of the very Founder and Pa-
 triarch of the Reformation. How different the
 style of the Catholic Church, where she deter-
 mines, from Scripture and tradition, all contro-
 versies relative to the Apostolic faith!

If the Catholic rule of faith obliges us to
 obey the Church, or to submit our judgment to
 that of other men; is not this rather humiliat-
 ing to human genius?

It is truly, and intentionally so. For unless
 we become docile and humble as little children,
 we can not enter into the Church of Christ.
 “ To arrive at truth, there are many ways: first,
 “ humility;

" humility: second, humility; third, humility."
 St. Aug. ep. 56. " Pride is the mother of all
 " heresies." Idem, against ep. Fund. c. 6.
 " O Timothy, guard the deposit (Tim. iv.):
 " What means a deposit? It is, what you have
 " been intrusted with, not what you have your-
 " self invented; an affair, *not of genius*, but of
 " doctrine." St. Vincent of Lerins, commonit.
 c. 18. " Unless you be converted, and become
 " as *little children*, you shall not enter into the
 " kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. v. 3. Nay,
 though our Saviour himself, to qualify St. Paul
 for an Apostle or witness of the resurrection, ap-
 peared in person to him; yet he still directed
 him to the authority of Ananias, for his full in-
 struction. The faithful, from the beginning,
 have always been referred to " The faith *once*
 " *delivered (by the original, and oral, tradition)*
 " to the Saints." Jude, ep. v. 3. The faith,
 therefore, of every true Catholic must be hum-
 ble and diffident; it relies not on human pene-
 tration, but on humble and perfect submission,
 and a full confidence in Christ's promises to his
 Church.

However, by submitting to the lawful Pastors
 of the Church, we in reality submit to God.
 For as the Father, with reference to our Saviour,

said to the chosen Apostles; "Hear ye him:" Matt. xvii. v. 5. so the Son of God, to authorize their mission, afterwards said; "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." John xx. v. 21. which implies their infallible authority. And: "He that heareth you, heareth me." Luke x. v. 16. As also: "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Matt. x. v. 20. Which texts sufficiently prove, that by submitting to the Church, we submit to God. Christ assumed the flesh of his Spouse, the Church; and gave her his spirit. What then if the flesh, that is the natural abilities, of individual Pastors be weak, since they are "endued with power from on high." Luke xxiv. v. 49. "He opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." Ibid. v. 45. Nor ought the infirmities of the Apostolic Pastors to scandalize your faith. They sit on the seats of the Apostles; whatever, *therefore*, their unanimous doctrine proposes, respecting your faith and conduct, *hear ye them*. But if, as other private men, some of them act amiss, imitate them not.

It may moreover be useful to remark, with Melch. Canus: that infallible guidance was promised to these our Pastors, not in their own favour;

favour; but for our sake, in favour of Christ's flock, to the end of the world. We are assured that the Apostles received the Spirit of Truth; and that both they have imparted, and their lawful successors, whether Saints or sinners, (for Wickliff's distinction is exploded) shall continue to impart and transmit this spirit, in every age, by the imposition of hands. Whence we are also assured, that in every legitimate Council of Catholic Bishops the Spirit of God presides: and to his guidance and authority we wholly submit. Nay more, we submit to the unerring doctrine of the Church, whenever its doctrine is manifest though not assembled, but spread over all the Christian world.

What difference is there between Scripture and Tradition?

There can be no essential difference; since they are both defined: *The Word of God*. The one however is written, the other unwritten. They therefore differ, accidentally, in this only: Scripture is, for a distinction's sake, termed: *The written word of God*. Though it was delivered down by tradition; and declared to be

the authentic or genuine word of God, by the unerring authority of the Catholic Church only: and its authenticity is, therefore, *traditional* or dependent on Catholic tradition.

Now Tradition itself is usually styled: The *unwritten* word of God. Though this also has been successively committed to writing, by Catholic Authors; and is religiously preserved in that Church, which is the depositary of the canonical scripture itself.

Wherefore St. Paul jointly recommends both oral and spiritual tradition: "Hold the *traditions* which you have learned, whether by *word* or by our *epistle*." 2 Theff. c. 2. And St. Luke declares that he writes his gospel from tradition: "As they (*original eye witnesses and ministers of the Word*) have delivered them (*gospel truths*) to us." Luke i. v. 2. From which words St. Chrysostom infers that the Evangelists, by writing the gospel: "published to the whole world a *written tradition*."

By traditional authority the Church is empowered, both to attest the authenticity of scripture and to determine its original, genuine and orthodox interpretation. Because the Catholic Church has continued through all ages, believing and practising the same religious tenets

tenets which were established by the Apostles, and were universally observed during their life time; in consequence of that final injunction: "Go—teach all nations—Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii.

Do the holy Fathers of the Catholic Church refer to Tradition?

Undoubtedly: "Wherefore the Scriptures cannot be the test (*speaking of controversy,*) nor can they decide the conflict; since, with relation to them, the victory must remain pendulous." Tertul. B, on Prescrip. c. 19. "They (*Heretics*) are averse from Tradition, saying that they are more penetrating, not than the Pastors only, but than the Apostles themselves—that they have discovered the genuine truth—the hidden mystery." St. Irenæus, b. iii. c. 2. Just so M. Luther boasted of his imaginary discovery of St. Paul's spirit and genuine meaning; and even presumed to judge the Apostles themselves. The ancient Heretics, in general, were ever appealing from tradition, to the written word alone: for the Catholic Church has, and always had, an exclusive right to tradition. Nay,
in

in tempting Christ: "The devil also uses the testimonies of scripture." St. Amb. b. 4. on St. Luke.

"Of public and private doctrines, held by the Church, we have the one in scripture, the other in unwritten apostolic tradition. And each is of equal force to establish true piety. This is clear, to any one tolerably skilled in the principles of religion. For, were unwritten customs to be disregarded, or esteemed of light authority; *we should secretly give the Gospel a mortal wound*, or rather should reduce it to a mere jingling and empty sound. Where does the scripture tell us to mark those who trust in Christ, with the sign of the Cross? Which of the sacred writers mentions the words of the invocation, when the bread of the eucharist and the cup of the blessing are exhibited? So we bless the baptismal water, the Chrism, and the person baptized from an unwritten and sacred Tradition. Where is the triple immersion, or the renunciation, &c. spoken of in scripture? For as Moses preserved the veneration of the sanctuary, by concealing it from public view; so the Apostles, and Fathers, who prescribed these forms in the beginning of the Church, consulted the veneration of the sacraments,

ments, by this traditional and mysterious concealment. Such things were delivered without writing, that the secrets of Religion might not be exposed to contempt. The obscurity too, in which the scripture is written, is a kind of silence, under which, for the reader's good, the sense is concealed I omit the rest: In what part of scripture have we even the Creed?" St. Basil, b. on the Holy Ghost, c. 27.

St. Epiphanius, Heresy 75, insists on the necessity of admitting traditional authority, from the Catholic custom of praying for the dead, which is not clearly prescribed in the new testament. As Tertullian likewise does, with regard to the ceremonies of baptism and of the eucharist, the frequent use of the sign of the cross, anniversary oblations, for the dead, and in honour of the martyrs. Lib. de cor. c. 3. "Of these and other customs, if you look for a command in scripture, you will find none. Tradition will be assigned for authority, custom for testimony, and faith for observance." Ibid. c. 4.

Admitting the authority of the uniform doctrine of the Fathers, &c. ought we to infer the necessity of submitting to Tradition?

We

We ought. St. Justin, St. Leo and other primitive Fathers assure us, that between the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, he instructed his Apostles concerning the hierarchical government, sacraments, rites and entire form of his Church: "For forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God," that is, *of the Church*. Acts, v. 3. And, appearing to the two disciples going to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning him." Luke xxiv. v. 17. Yet, how interesting soever such divine comments must seem to us all, the Evangelist was not directed to write the detail of them. But St. John, in relating our Lord's last discourse; importing the authority conferred on his Church, her union and perpetuity; is most explicit, clear and fuller.

Separatists also often own it reasonable to submit to tradition: "To appeal to the scriptures alone, when the sense of them only is questionable, is to declare: That we will submit to no other trial, but to our own sense." Thorn-dike, just weights and measures, c. 21. "Let us learn to love, reverence, and venerate the teaching Church . . . ; as it was most agreeably

ably signified in Samson's allegory: Had ye not plowed with *my heifer*, ye had not found out my riddle; that is: Had ye not heard the Church, which is labouring in the ministry, and is *the depositary* of the word of God, the word of God itself had been utterly *unknown to you*." Melancthon, in loc. com. de Ecc. p. 348. The compass were useless, without pilots: and so were the scripture, without the traditional authority of the Church. Without this, the scripture, as a stolen bill of exchange, would become useless; for want of proper endorsement:

What are the facts which finally determine you to submit to the ancient Catholic and Apostolic Tradition?

1. Fact: The Church was already established, before any part of the Christian law was committed to writing: all necessary points were already believed and practised; Tradition was already in possession; nor was any book of the new testament afterwards composed to serve for a complete rule.

2. Our Saviour, in the whole written gospel, never once refers us to any future writing, for his faith or new law: though he commanded
his

his Apostles to "Teach (*μαθητευσατε*, as their disciples) all nations." Matt. 28. The new testament was indeed, afterwards, successively and *occasionally* written; whether by Apostles or others: but, "The faith once *delivered* (*that is, Tradition*) to the Saints," (St. Jude, v. 3.) was the original. The conception, nativity and infancy of our Lord were all written from the tradition of the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. And St. Luke expressly declares that he writes his Gospel from the tradition of the original "Eye witnesses and ministers of the word." v. 2.

3. The Apostolic manuscripts were mostly, if not wholly, directed to those *Christian Churches*, from which the Apostolic Authors were then absent; and were consequently to supply for their ordinary *oral* tradition, delivered by preaching, or catechising.

4. The canon of the authentic books was not universally known, or precisely determined, till long after the death of the Apostles.

5. All heresies have ever owed their origin to this pernicious principle: The primitive scriptures may be interpreted by private authority, without deferring to the primitive faith of the great Church. Contrary to St. Peter, ep. 2. c. i. v. 21.

6. Till

6. Till our Saviour had accomplished his passion, the mysteries (his divinity, &c.) were not so clearly revealed, as they afterwards were. Yet the Evangelists, after that period, inform us of scarcely any thing more; except *his conversing with his disciples for forty days; his opening their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures: Luke xxiv. v. 45. and his promise, to remain with them to the end of the world, and to send to them the Spirit of Truth.*

Is not the scripture alone however, without traditional authority, a sufficient rule of faith and criterion of orthodoxy?

No. If it were, there had been no heresies: nor *should* there have been more than one history of the gospel; and that so clear and explicit, in every point of faith, as to preclude all doubt. But, as the scripture itself directs, we must follow the beaten path, the Tradition of all ages: we must *hear the Church.* Matt. 18. v. 17. 18. "Therefore, Brethren, stand fast; and hold the *Traditions* which you have learned, whether by *word*, or by our epistle." 2 Thess. c. ii. v. 14. On which text, St. Chrysostom:

Y

"The

"The Apostles did not commit the whole to writing, but delivered down many things without writing. And these are equally worthy of faith." Edit. Eton. tom. 4. p. 237. St. Paul admonished St. Timothy to adhere to *his* examples, customs, motives and whatever is implied in *tradition*. He also writes to him in these terms: "The things, which thou hast *heard of* (from) *me before many witnesses*, the same commend (*to writing?* *No; but,*) to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also." 2 Tim. c. ii. v. 2.

Unless we rely on some infallible authority, beside the written letter, how can we discern what is revealed, from what is not? For as to the scriptures, the learned themselves dispute about the *various readings*, and the right interpretation of many important texts; not to mention that, especially since Luther's precedent, some reformed Doctors dissent from the Church, even in the canonical distinction of authentic from apocryphal parts of scripture. Hath God revealed a system of divine doctrine, essential to our salvation, and after a few ages suffered the whole to become a mere problem? To what purpose then hath he revealed the means of my salvation, if I am still left to guess,

gues, what those means are? No: God hath not left his work imperfect. Our Saviour is, the "*Wise man* who built his house (*his Church*) upon a rock, (*Peter, the centre of union*) and the rain fell (*relaxations of discipline and inundations of vice, tending to sap the foundation*) and the winds blew, (*persecutions, schisms, and heresies arose*) and they beat upon that *House*, and it fell not, for it was founded on a Rock." Matt. vii. v. 24, 25. But he who builds not his faith on this Rock, relying preferably on the *soundness* of his own private judgment, or on mere human reason, is like the fool, who built his house on sand.

The civil laws require proper authority, to point out their original import, and to apply them to an infinite variety of cases: how necessary then must authority be, in the interpretation of the divine law? St. Peter therefore admonishes us, that in the sublime epistles of St. Paul (on which nevertheless, frantically misinterpreted, Luther fabricated the reformation), there "are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction," 2 Pet. c. iii. v. 16. These and other texts evince, that Tradition is necessary;

not only to establish the authenticity of canonical scripture, but also to determine the true meaning of each part.

Without this secure guidance, the divine scriptures themselves were to me as useless, or dangerous, as a collection of most exquisite drugs; each a sovereign remedy for my respective ailments, without the assistance of able physicians, (not of mere quacks) to assign their proper use. For, in perusing what I should judge the most necessary books, even those of the new law: here, I should imagine that faith alone might save me: See St. Paul's epistles and St. John's 1 ep. c. iii. Here, that personal faith, and complete immersion, are essential to baptism: Matt. xxviii. Here, that the washing of feet is as truly a sacrament, as the Eucharist itself: John xiii. Here, that if I lose the grace of baptism, and by mortal sin crucify my Saviour anew; it is useless to sue for a second pardon, by penance: Heb. vi. v. 6. Here, that meat retaining the least blood, is most strictly and repeatedly forbidden, even to the Gentiles: for no repeal is mentioned: Acts xv. Here, that oaths are never lawful: Matt. xxiii. Here, that the Elect are impeccable: John, 1 ep. v. iii. v. 9. and the same may be said of innumerable

nable other parts of Scripture: whence also various heresies have been forged. Nay, we might imagine that the original precept: "Remember thou keep holy the *sabbath* day," were still obligatory: because we find no authority, of scripture, changing the seventh day to sunday, which is the first day; and yet we find: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. xix. v. 17. Whence Dr. Brett, a zealous Protestant, remarks this inconsistency: that, "Those who speak most contemptibly of Tradition, pretend the highest zeal for the veneration of sunday." Tradition necessary, p. 27.

Since in effect we have and admit the Scripture, why should we be referred to the Church?

Because the word of God itself teaches, that what he chiefly requires of us, is, Humility; or, that we diffide in ourselves, and trust in him, and in his visible and authorized ministry. And because Luther's rule of faith, directing to the written word only, is of late rejected, even by his disciples. They have learned from experience that this rule, excluding all traditional or ecclesiastical authority, naturally tended to

inspire presumption. Yet our modern followers of Luther (who judiciously call their faith *persuasion*) have not hitherto been able to invent a new rule of faith, different from either ours or Luther's. To recur to authority, were to return to the Catholic Church.

To what end were the Scriptures principally designed?

Moses's history of the Creation seems written to prevent the corruption of those historical facts which it contains. And the Gospel, or the history of our Redemption; with the Acts of the Apostles, as its proper appendage, were likewise written, to serve as a standing monument of the important facts relative to the life, passion, resurrection and ascension of our Redeemer; and of the accomplishment of his prophesy, by the conversion of the Gentiles. But the other Apostolical writings were chiefly occasioned by particular emergencies.

The *intentional* difference, however, between the old and new testament is evident: That was to be engraved on stone; this, to be impressed on the tablets of the heart: that was, by God's express command, committed to writing; none
of

of this, except the apocalypse, was written by exprefs command: that determines the rites and prescribes the precise form of Jewish worship; this, no where give a detail, *in form*, of Christian worship; but refers to the Church: to that, (especially to the prophetic writings) our Saviour and his Apostles expressly refer those Jews, whom neither the words, nor the works of Christ had convinced; but to this, no reference is ever expressed.

The Apostolic epistles, deposited with the Church, were mostly written *occasionally*, to correct particular abuses, or to oppose certain heresies: as afterwards the decrees of all Catholic councils also were, though succeeding Heretics have been ever abusing, corrupting, or contorting those same sacred texts, especially St. Paul's epistles, from their original meaning, implied in the circumstances in which they were, *occasionally*, written. Thus, for instance, the arguments which St. Paul insisted upon, (in order to supersede, by the Christian faith, those *ceremonial or typical works*, prescribed conformably to the old covenant *of Works*) was, both in St. Paul's time, and lately again by M. Luther, misapplied, to exclude the necessity and merit even of Christian virtues. Moreover,
that

that SS. Peter, James, John and Jude wrote *occasionally*, against those Heretics who were attempting to wrest St. Paul's meaning, as if he had thought that faith without good works sufficed to salvation; See St. Augustin on Faith and Works, c. xiv.

But Luther rejected from *his* reformed canon, St. James's ep. St. Peter's second ep. the second and third of St. John, the epistle to the Hebrews, St. Jude, and the Apocalypse: not, it seems, for their having been formerly doubted of by some, but because most of those books too clearly contradicted his favourite discovery, of *imputative justification by faith alone*; which system Luther esteemed the sole essential point of the Reformation. And, hence, passing his blasphemous sentence on St. James, he terms his sacred epistle, *Foolish*; "*stultam*." See M. Luther's preface to the said epistle. See also M. Chemnitz.

Is the canon, or determination of authentic scripture, indubitably known, independently on the authority of the Catholic Church?

No. The book of Hermas, or the *Pastor*, is quoted by St. Irenæus, as sacred scripture,

"The

"The scripture, της γραφῆς, says,"—See Euseb. b. 5. c. 8. In like manner, St. Barnaby's epistle, and the first ep. of St. Clement Rom. to the Corinthians are cited, by some, as canonical, or as authoritative books. And, on the contrary, some books of the old testament, Esther especially, were doubted of in the three first ages; as also the second epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, that of St. James, that of St. Paul to the Hebrews. St. Jude's, and the Revelations were, respectively, for some time contested; nor were they universally held canonical, till the unerring authority of the Church admitted them and proved them to be such.

Were we not to rely on the Church, we should reduce the number of books, *undoubtedly apostolical*, to these only: one epistle of St. Peter, one of St. John, thirteen of St. Paul, and two gospels, i. e. of St. Matthew and St. John: for SS. Mark and Luke were not apostles. The conduct of the disunited Societies is, therefore, unaccountable: they receive the sacred canon from the authority of the Catholic Church, and yet abuse its contents in support of such doctrines as the same Church condemns. Has the Church less authority to teach the true doctrine, than

than to recommend genuine scripture? Nay, one chief rule, serving to distinguish the true scriptures from false, is, and ever was, to compare the contents with the already known and indubitable doctrine of the Catholic Church, and with other scriptures already approved and admitted by her authority.

Show that the Catholic Laity may rest secure on Church authority?

Suppose the most simple and illiterate person; for such are not less dear to the Author of salvation; seeking for the true faith. He finds, that unless he believes mysteries wholly impenetrable, and has the entire Catholic faith, he can not be saved. "Whoever would be saved, " it is necessary above all that he hold the Catholic faith." Athanasian Creed. He finds the various texts of scripture strained and tortured, to favour opposite and contradictory sects. For his part, he can not read; much less judge of the important *Whole of Faith*. Yet, he is a *man of good will*: and surely our Saviour willeth his salvation. Hath he then provided for such a man no safe guidance, easily discoverable?— Doubtless he hath. This simple and illiterate man

man needs only to submit to the authority of the Catholic or *universal* Church.

By this humble and docile submission, he acquires a rightful claim to all those lights which the Spirit of Truth has communicated to his most holy and illustrious servants, ever since the beginning of the Church. He is guided by the united light of all the holy Fathers; collected, as in a focus, in the Catholic Church, purified by her discernment, and reflected on him for his secure guidance. He envies not the most erudite or profound Doctors: for in reality, he is better enlightened than many great Philosophers, and than even Sir Isaac Newton ever was. For his sake we behold not only the Apostles depositing their authentic books with this Church; but also the great Ignatiuses, Justins, Irenæuses, Clements, Tertullians, Origenes, Cyprians, Hilarys, Athanasiuses, Basils, Cyrils, Gregorys, Ambroses, Chrysostoms, Jeroms, Augustins, Leos, Bedes, Anselms, Bernards, Aquinases, Bossuets, and the rest, in successive ages, each bearing his lucubrations, the fruits of his prayer, fasting and assiduous meditation, and presenting them, with entire deference, to the Church the Spouse of Christ.

The

The Church, on the other hand, is seen receiving their writings with approbation and applause; yet prudently comparing and discerning; adopting the truth, and sometimes rejecting such conjectures (formed even by Saints) as are found not to proceed from that spirit, by which she is incessantly actuated, infallibly enlightened and effectually enabled to divide the true light of heaven, from human darkness and the dictates of flesh and blood. The divine assistance is discoverable in the mean which the Church has constantly observed, relative to Nestor and Eutyches, and to a thousand others.

Thus hath God superseded and confounded the wisdom of the high-minded Wise, by wonderfully directing his light to the simple, humble and diffident; in a word, to the little ones who trust in him. "He gave some Apostles, and
" some Prophets, and other some Evangelists,
" and other some Pastors and Doctors, for the
" perfecting of the saints, for the work of the
" ministry, for the edifying (*or construction*) of
" the *Body* of Christ, (*his Church*)—that hence-
" forth we be no more children tossed to and
" fro, and carried about with every wind of
" doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to
" deceive."

"deceive." Ephes. c. iv. v. 11. and seq. Such is the subordinate and beautiful hierarchy of the Catholic Church, instituted by its Founder to secure its perfect union.

Upon the whole, it is evident that the supreme authority of the Catholic Ministry, or of the teaching Church, and consequently that plain rule of faith, which can be consistent only with unquestionable authority, were by our Saviour calculated, and by his Church retained, altogether in favour of the simple faithful or such illiterate men, *of good will*, as the one we have here supposed. They need only to obey the Catholic Church, or to follow the faith of the visible and originally authorized Ministry, conformably to the rule prescribed and inculcated by the Apostle of the Gentiles: "Remember your Prelates who have spoken to you the word of God: *Whose faith follow*, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ yesterday, and to day: and he is the same for ever (*always present in his Church and guiding his successive ministers*). Be not led away with various, and strange doctrines." Heb. xiii. v. 7. and seq.

The

The Catholic rule, by referring the faithful to the Church, that is, to the authority of the lawful Ministry, authorized by the Son of God, and beyond appeal, renders our faith secure. For it is by this rule only, that "We all meet into the unity of faith." Ephes. iv. v. 13. The form of the Apostles Creed itself also corresponds with this rule: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, (and without interval) the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints." Thus our faith in, or reliance on, the Church, is subjoined and annexed to our belief in the Holy Ghost. For as we believe that the Holy Ghost animates, actuates, and *guides the Church into all truth*; so we must believe the holy Catholic Church in all that she teaches; and therefore, on this *speaking and unerring* authority we rest secure.

Then, if by reading some detached, or otherwise obscure texts, we are led to doubt of any point; as for instance, of the modern administration of baptism, to infants, on a representative profession of their faith; the authority of the Catholic Church removes our doubt, since her universal practice evinces its validity. We are likewise referred to the 6th canon of the Council held at Carthage in the 4th century, wherein we find infant-baptism approved. Hence we
are

are abundantly satisfied, and must acquiesce; because, if "Where there are two or three gathered together in—(*Christ's name*)—there is *he* in the midst of them:" Matt. xviii. there can be no doubt of his presiding over a legitimate and approved assembly of the Catholic Pastors. "Nor ought it (*infant-baptism*) to be believed at all, were it not an Apostolical Tradition." St. Aug. on Genes. c. xxiii. In this instance, as in many others, where the scriptures are either silent, or occasion ambiguity, the Church appeals to Catholic Tradition, and decides the controversy. Her inviolable right to decide is our sole refuge, and our absolute security in every doubt, danger of innovation, or occasional perplexity.

Yet the Church, as an indulgent Parent, not content with the mere exclusion of all perplexity, prepares our way to full faith, or acquiescence in every revealed article, by premising sufficient reasons and traditional authorities, to move all to adopt her canonical decisions. Let a man of good will peruse the small code of the canons decided by the Catholic Church, in her very last œcumenical council. Will he not be moved, edified, and (if misinformed before) disabused? What charity, precaution, light, precision, au-

thority, decency, gravity, are every where conspicuous! What brightness, even of internal evidence, shines forth from every part! The whole scripture is consulted: the holy Fathers, Martyrs and ancient Authors are seen approaching with their orthodox volumes, and subjoining their unanimous verdict to the judicial authorities of the Prophets and Apostles. "And
 "Wisdom is justified by her children." Matt. xi. v. 19. For in this august assembly of the Catholic Church, all the Saints from the beginning, present themselves; not as strangers, but as fellow-citizens; as forming, with the living Pastors, one inviolable fraternity, paying grateful homage to the Spouse of their Redeemer, and their common Mother.

When the Scriptures, Fathers, and living Pastors also, who are watching over Christ's flock in the various parts of Christendom, all concur in approving a point, contested before, and exposed to innovation, then, at last, the Church proceeds to denounce her awful Anathema. Yet nothing is exaggerated: the known truths, (by whomsoever discovered) are alone defined. Where Revelation has not evidently illustrated (as, respecting the question of the infallibility of the Pope, &c. &c.) there the Church is silent.

Such

Such is the language of those venerable Apostolic Pastors, whose predecessors were able to say :
 " It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to
 " us." Acts xv.

Did not the Reformers proceed with similar deliberation ?

Luther's passionate proceedings are too notorious. Melancthon, the most moderate of these heresiarchs, the ordinary scribe and drudge of the Reformation, is the most able and proper man to afford us authentic information : " They
 " (reformed tenets) must be *changed* often, and
 " accommodated to the occasion." Melancthon, ep. to Luther ; written while Melancthon was employed in drawing up the articles of the Augsburg Confession. " I *changed* and *changed* again
 " something daily, and I would have *changed*
 " much more, had our associates permitted. But
 " they care for nothing." Idem, b. 4. ep. 95. Is this unlike the building of Babel ? " And he
 " (the Lord) said : Behold, it is *one* people, and
 " all have *one* tongue (*hitherto Catholic union*) ;
 " and they have begun to do this, neither will
 " they leave off—Come ye therefore, let us go
 " down, and there confound their tongue, that

"they may not understand one another's speech." Gen. xi. v. 6, 7. Thus, to this day, the builders of the Reformation have never been able to understand each other.

What are we hence to conclude?

That we can not, consistently, admit the Scriptures, unless we submit to Tradition; nor submit to Tradition, unless we rely on the infallible authority of the ancient Catholic Church, the sole true and original depository both of Tradition and Scripture; and consequently, that we must profess ourselves either Catholics or Infidels. For this reason, the learned and moderate Beveridge, Protestant Bishop of St. Asaph's, to prove Episcopacy and confute the Calvinists or Puritans, writes thus: "Of what the Apostles did, in the propagation of the Gospel and the establishment of the Churches, *very few things* were committed to writing—and though St. Paul wrote several, and some other Apostles a few epistles, yet these were written *occasionally*, as I may say, and rather suppose the actual Apostolical form of Church government already known to all, than publish it." Bever. Cod. can. vindic. c. 11. He adds, that the

the Apostles and their successors afterwards adapted the hierarchy to the progressive increase of the faithful.

About the end of the second age, a weighty Author wrote thus: " Had the Apostles not left
 " us the Scriptures, should we not have been
 " still obliged to follow the chain of Tradition
 " which they *did* leave to those to whom they
 " entrusted the Churches? Such is the order
 " that several barbarous nations follow, who be-
 " lieve in Christ, without the use of letters,
 " having the truths of salvation written by the
 " Holy Ghost in their hearts, and solicitously
 " guarding the *old Tradition*—Yet, as to Chri-
 " stian sentiments, customs and practice, they
 " are perfectly instructed in the faith, and are,
 " agreeable to God, living up to all justice, cha-
 " stity and wisdom. Nay if any one, conver-
 " sant in their language, proposes to them the
 " tenets invented by Heretics, they instantly
 " stop their ears, and flee as far off as possible,
 " detesting such blasphemous discourse, which
 " even to their hearing is insupportable. Thus
 " supported by the *old Apostolical Tradition*,
 " &c." St. Irenæus, b. 3. c. 4.

Had our faith depended wholly on scripture,
 some sufficient catechism or clear standard should
 have

have been inserted, with a plain declaration, *That this formulary, canon, or confession of faith, contained all that was necessary for a Christian to believe and practise.* But on the contrary, the Apostles Creed, a short summary of faith only, was itself committed to Tradition; and is therefore to all Separatists no more than apocryphal scripture. And though this Creed itself neither promises to circumscribe our faith, nor even mentions our belief in the scriptures, as it does that in the holy Catholic Church; yet, soon after the invention of printing, a certain bookish enthusiasm began to fill the minds of some vain men; who slighting the practice of all former ages, attempted, by a cursory perusal of the whole scripture, to extract thence each his own faith. But experience, which (though too fatally slow) is the sure friend of truth, gradually demonstrates more and more, that to innovate or change the original faith, is to open a breach to scepticism and infidelity.

May not the learned, at least, distinguish Fundamentals or Essentials, from Unessentials; and consult their private judgment with regard to the latter, but submit to clear scripture for the former?

No.

No. The Catholic rule precludes all such prevaricating measures. When Mark Anthony de Dominis first arrived in England with his discovery of this celebrated distinction, he was indeed received with applause, as a Paraclete of their yet unsettled Reformation. But since the dazzling novelty of this hypothesis has vanished, several more prudent Protestants have entirely rejected it, as *futile, illimitable and pernicious*; as destitute of authority, either from scripture or tradition. See Bp. Beveridge, Cod. can.—Colovius, a Lutheran, declares it, “a supposition destitute of all proof, and even most false, to imagine that heresy consists only in denying what is necessary for salvation;—because, at this rate, SS. Augustin and Epiphanius would seem to have anathematized many innocent men.” Abridgment of controversy, p. 34. This distinction, in reality, imports no more than a subtle pretence for appealing, from both scripture and tradition, to private judgment.

The decrees of the Council of Jerusalem, Acts xv. do not relate to faith, but to discipline; yet their objects are there termed, “necessary things.” v. 28. St. Paul, likewise, regarded even the impropriety of women praying in the Church without a veil, a point of mere discipline,

pline, as an affair of sufficient importance to demand an absolute submission. He therefore, for a final and decisive evidence of the necessity of correcting the abuse and acquiescing in this point of discipline, alleges the uniform practice of the universal Church: "But if any man seem to be "contentious, we have no such custom, nor (*hath*) "the Church of God." 1 Cor. c. xi, v. 16. And in like manner, in the primitive Church, the mere circumstance of time, relative to the celebration of Easter, to maintain uniformity of discipline, was deemed an object worthy of the attention even of Apostolic Prelates, as St. Polycarp, &c. So were, the due reconciliation of such as had fallen off, the proper use of pious images, and the like. It is, therefore, essentially necessary to submit to whatever the Church defines.

This gratuitous distinction therefore, of *essential* from *unessential* parts of the Christian doctrine, this easy pillow of the Reformation, has fatally proved treacherous. Though, like the cushions prepared by the false prophets, Ezech. xiii. it has indeed served to lull so many unstable, restless and wandering Christians, and to render them insensible of the danger of their situation. Neither the primitive Church, nor the

the holy scripture distinguishes between *Fundamentals* and *Non-fundamentals*. Yet were the distinction necessary, the Catholic Church is alone authorized to draw the line.

Nay, were that distinction once admitted, the whole scripture might be reduced to a very few essentials, and the rest become equivalent to apocryphal. Then the very foundations also of all *divine* faith would be easily sapped, by a certain class of *free-thinking*, (now, rather *free-speaking*) Christian infidels, who "blaspheme" "whatsoever things *they know not*." Jude v. 10. But, in short, every part of scripture is surely *essential*, because *revealed*; whereas, let private judgment circumscribe *necessary faith*, and it will gradually proscribe all faith. Then Deism, Materialism, Atheism, and the whole *abomination of desolation will be seen, standing in the holy place*. Dan. ix. and Matt. xxiv.

Is not faith in the holy Trinity, the Incarnation and Death of our Redeemer, and a Future State, all that is necessary to salvation?

It is not so; unless we be invincibly ignorant of the rest. Those are indeed the cardinal points of faith; and are therefore esteemed, by
the

the Church, so essentially necessary, that without the explicit and express belief of them, no ignorance, how invincible soever, can save us.

But alas, with respect even to the main points of faith, there are too many Christians who flatter themselves, that they believe the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the Eternity of rewards or torments; merely because they do not absolutely deny these articles; but regard them, as professed infidels do God himself, like a distant and immaterial object, existing in the highest heavens only; and therefore they think rarely and cursorily on such mysteries, nor ever stop to ponder them in their hearts. They have been baptized; human respect therefore forbids them to fix their view on these mysteries, lest they should refuse to believe. They therefore leave them surrounded, as it were, with impenetrable darkness; observing a *decent*, but neutral silence; and they pass for faithful Christians. So Aretinus, who had satirized almost all great men, being asked why he had not extended his satire even to God? answered, He was to me unknown; "*non mihi notus erat.*"

To try their faith, therefore, it is necessary to come to such mysteries, as are placed, *seemingly*,
at

at less distance: "The word is nigh thee, *even* " *in thy mouth.*" Rom. x: v. 8. Is the Son of God, strictly and absolutely, *God?* For, "no man can say, *The Lord Jesus*, but by the Holy " Ghost." 1 Cor. c. xii. v. 3. —Does Baptism produce a new creature?—Is the Church infallible?—Were our Lord's words effectually verified, when taking the bread, he said, "*This is* " *my body?*"—"Can this man give us his flesh " *to eat?*" "Can God prepare a banquet in " *this desert?*" Here they must submit reason and sense to the omnipotent word of God, or declare for infidelity.

Finally, the hidden *God* was, till his incarnation, veiled under his visible creation, or under the prophetic types, while conversant visibly on earth, under the humble form of man; and since his ascension, he remains to the end, veiled under the visible form of that bread which descends from heaven, "and gives life to the world." John vi.

CHAPTER V.

HERESY.

IN what consists the nature and essence of Heresy?

Heresy signifies choice: and, in point of faith, means a choosing of our own faith, independent on Church authority. Heresy is defined. An obstinate adherence to some point of doctrine contrary to the decision and belief of the Catholic Church. Or, almost equivalently: An opinion of private men, different from *that* of the Catholic and orthodox Church." Doctor Johnson's Dictionary. This definition may be rendered orthodox, by clearing up the ambiguous use of the pronoun *that*, instead of *the decision*, or belief.

Such is the essence of heresy; and as to its effects: "The property of Heretics is, not to stop long within the limits of that error, for the sake of which they separate from the Church, but to glide daily downward to a lower and worse state; . . . they divide themselves
into

into many branches," . . . &c. St. Gregory the great, on second c. Job. "You subvert
 " the old tenets by new ones: again you mend
 " the new ones themselves by a fresh invoca-
 " tion: and in fine, you reform what you had
 " mended, by repeated innovation." S. Hilary,
 b. 1. against Const.—The same Saint says of
 the Arians: "There are as many faiths as men;
 " they have their yearly and monthly faiths;
 " they make creeds, to condemn and repent
 " of them; and form new ones, to anathe-
 " matize those who adhere to their old ones."
 He adds, that "they all had scripture texts,
 " and the words of *Apostolic Faith* in their
 " mouths, only to impose on weak minds: for
 " by attempting to change faith, which is un-
 " changeable, faith is lost. They correct and
 " amend, *till weary of all, they condemn all.*"
 Id. b. 3. against Const. "It was as lawful for
 " the Valentinians, as for Valentinns; for the
 " Marcionites, as for Marcion, to innovate
 " faith as they thought fit." Tertul. on pre-
 script.

Is variability an inherent property of he-
 refy?

Yes. For a false principle, in every science, leads to many unforeseen and absurd consequences: and in this respect, variation becomes a necessary consequence of heresy. In effect, all ancient heresies branched forth into a variety of subsequent sects. But this is to us still more evident in Luther's modern Reformation. See the authentic "History of the variations of the Protestant Churches," by B. Bossuet. What a variety of rules of faith is seen, *concerning the same point*, successively following each other! Martin Luther appears, An. 15 17, and rests his new system on *the ruin of free will*: "We have no free will." B. On slave will. He then introduces his leading principle: *The inamissibility of grace*, if once acquired by faith: and consequently, he insists on the *certainty of gratuitous justification*, where faith is certain. "No sins, except unbelief alone, can cause damnation." Luther, B. on the Capt. of Bab. t. 2. fol. 74. This tenet is seconded by the French reforming Apostle: "A man once justified, always continues so, how great and grievous sins soever he commits." Calvin, b. 2. instit. c. 11.

Again: "The commandments of God are impossible." Luther on Christian Liberty.

"All

"All good works are sins." Id. b. against Latomus.—But attend, once for all, every dutiful child of this Reformer! "Let this be thy rule: "Where the scripture commands a good work, 'understand it thus, that it forbids thee to do "a good work, because thou canst not do it." Luther, t. 3. fol. 171, 2. Is not this, truly, a golden rule of Reformation? This system of justification was flattering and easy as the descent of Avernus.

This new method of justification was Luther's *Palladium*; and a kind of panoply, supplying for all Christian justice. And truly, could he have realized this method of justification, who would not be a Lutheran? Believe only; and be sure of salvation! But the civil Magistrate, as well as the Catholic Church, required that, "With fear and trembling we *work out* our "salvation." Phil. ii. v. 12. A variation was therefore necessary: and this first and most precious discovery of Luther's; with Calvin's improvement, subjoining to it both *predestination* (even to sin and hell) and the *certainty of salvation*; were soon after abandoned. Yet the subdivided sect, called Methodists, seem of late to have again adopted Luther's original and

fundamental tenet, of secure justification by *faith* alone.

Calvin, ashamed of the variations and animosities that disgraced the original Reformation, with his usual and cunning policy, wrote thus: "It is important *to hide* from future ages " every suspicion of such dissensions." Calvin, ep. to Melancthon, p. 145. Andrew Dudith, afterward, complained of this spirit of innovation and variation, in these terms; "Ours are " driven about by every wind of doctrine, to " and fro. We can, perhaps, know what is their " faith to day; but we are not sure what it will " be to morrow. In what point of faith do " these Churches, at war with the Pope, agree " among themselves? Go through all the articles of faith, you will not find one point " that is not maintained by some, to be of " faith; and rejected by others as impious." See Beza, ep. 1.

In short, a man of this *opinion* or *persuasion* may without danger of censure, hold every article of Catholic faith; provided he hold them all *from private persuasion*, and not because the Catholic Church has defined them: not as the word of God, *proposed by the Church*; but, understood by the *soundness* of his private judgment.

ment. "Licence they mean, when they cry
"liberty." Milton.

If St. Paul directs us, "to try 'all:': how is
variability a proof of heresy?

St. Paul, when he says: "Despise not pro-
"phesies. Prove all things." Thess. c. v.
v. 20, 21. is giving directions for the govern-
ment of the Church at Thessalonica; and he
there subjects the private spirits, *even of Pro-*
phets, to the judgment of the Church. For his
epistle was delivered, immediately, to the Pa-
stors; and by their ministry, read to the laity.
See v. 27. *ibid.*

If therefore they were not allowed imme-
diately to credit all that such Prophets spoke;
shall we believe the discoveries of M. Luther;
who owns he was instigated, often by a doubt-
ful, and sometimes by an evil spirit? Read his
passionate and grossly scurrilous writing. Do you
believe that the furious heresiarch was inspired
by the Holy Ghost? If so, why is no neat
translation of all the works of *this holy German*
Father of the reformed Churches published?
But his discourses were still more opprobrious
and more replete with ribaldry, than his
writings.

tings. Carlostadius, Zuinglius, Calvin, &c. were inspired by no better spirit: and discord reigned among all the Chieftains of the Reformation.

Now as Socrates remarked that the Pagan deities ought first to agree among themselves, before they could pretend to claim his worship: so Erasmus, b. 18. advises the Reformers, "To agree among themselves, before they pretend to give the law to the whole world." But alas, out of the one true Church, all is doubt. Nay, each individual, presuming to try all things, not only dissents from the rest of his persuasion, in several points; but varies even his own system, occasionally. For instance; "The effects of *private judgment* are these: multiplicity of sects and opinions; perpetual wranglings, without any Umpire, or Judge of controversy." &c. Lesley, Christianity demonstr. p. 181, 2. So far he reasons well, from facts and experience, against the Deists. But a few years after; having, we are willing to suppose, quite forgotten his former principle; and having now to turn his battery against the Catholic Church, he proceeds thus: "*Private judgment* is all we have for the belief of God, or of Christ, and . . . for the choice of a Church

"a Church In short, we must trust to
"it in every thing without exception." Idem,
The case stated, &c. p. 46. He might more
plainly, and with no more glaring inconsistency,
have said: Follow your own judgment, till you
quit the Roman Catholic Church: but when
once you are emancipated; resign it and submit
to the Reformation; lest you go straight on
to incredulity.

The evident conveniences arising, in general,
from all rules and institutions already estab-
lished and reduced to practice; and the many
inconveniences with which innovations are
generally attended, prove: That no established
laws, customs, &c. in point of religion espe-
cially, should be changed, unless where the
advantage is evident.

What were the distinctive characters of Lu-
ther, Calvin and Melancthon, the chief Re-
formers?

M. Luther's or *Ludder's* genius was keen, but
impetuous, rash, overbearing, fond of novelty
and singularity, even while yet in the habit of
St. Augustin, and when he read St. Paul's
epistle to the Romans: Till at last, full of him-
self,

self, and disdaining all restraint, his phrensy carried him to announce himself to the world, as a second St. Paul, or an extraordinary Apostle: "To whom (*as he was vain enough to write*) the *mystery* of genuine faith, hidden " from former (*dark*) ages in God, had been " revealed." See Luther, on 1 Cor. c. 5. Mahomet's pretensions were scarcely more extravagant. But Luther had discovered a *mystery*, by which faith alone suffices to salvation: and he found a number of Christians already disposed to change and reform their *faith* on such terms; though St. Paul himself would hardly have prevailed upon them to reform their *lives*.

J. Calvin, or rather *Cauvin*, is described in one word: He was a subtle and cunning genius.

But *Melancthon* (which is the Greek for his proper German name *Schwarfherd*) was the most sincere and moderate of all the reformers: and was so eminent a linguist, that (had style alone sufficed) he would probably have succeeded *Erasmus*, as *Primate* of European literature. Being made Greek Professor at Wittenburg, he became acquainted with Luther: and having hitherto never applied to the study of theology, he

he was seduced by his friend, and apostatized. He was moreover weak and credulous with respect to dreams, omens and astrology, objects of oracular importance among the chief reformers. He however counselled his own Mother to remain a Catholic. He wished for a general Council; being continually so tortured with remorse, as to long for death. He could not abide Luther's arrogance; nor yet resolve to abandon his once chosen leader. He therefore proceeded reluctantly and was frequently bathed in tears.

It must however be owned, that Philip Melancthon had irrevocably imbibed Luther's lethargic dose, of imputative justice. But the Council of Trent had not yet drawn the line of final discrimination; by which, soon after, every *essential* error was more explicitly and clearly exposed. Till this period, many points were deemed ambiguous: while animosity and recrimination, exasperating both the Catholics and the Innovators, rendered The truth itself less acceptable. For asperity seldom reclaims from error.

But all Catholic Pastors who (like St. Augustin, reclaiming the Donatist) are actuated by the true Spirit of the Church, will always be
ready

ready to sacrifice every temporal interest and provocation, to the happy reunion and eternal welfare of each Schismatic, or Separatist. Not so Luther, Zuinglius, or Calvin; whose irreconcilable grudges broke the heart of unfortunate Melancthon, the Heraclitus of those reforming Philosophers. See the history of Melancthon, chiefly from his own writings, in B. Bossuet's hist. of the Var.

Let us, therefore, take care never to treat any Heretic with asperity; but meekly show him his error. Not only the Jews, but the unorthodox Christians also, "Because of unbelief" were broken off. But thou (*Catholic*) "standest by faith: *be not high-minded; but fear.*" Rom. xi. v. 20. Let each Catholic Doctor tremble at the example of Tertullian, "Who through envy, and exasperated by the contumelies of the Roman clergy, fell into Montanism." St. Jerom, on illustr. men, c. 53. Let us then aim at conquering evil by good: that so all sectaries, instead of vainly and scandalously pretending to reform the Catholic faith, may return to their Mother Church, and usefully co-operate to a thorough reformation of discipline and the extinction of incredulity and libertinism! O, "You who are spiritual," instruct

"instruct such . . . in the spirit of meekness,
 "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
 Gal. vi. v. 1.

Did the pretended Reformation adopt its present form at once?

No. This Reformation, like every unorthodox innovation, receded gradually from the Catholic doctrine: 1. Degree, Luther proceeded from condemning the abuse of indulgences, to attack their validity. 2. He appealed from the Pope to a General Council. 3. He resisted the whole Catholic Church. And since the Church condemned his new and renowned system of justification, which he pretended to have clearly discovered in St. Paul, he at last went the fatal and desperate length: outrageously pronouncing the universal and visible Church, liable to errors in faith. Then seeing himself followed by his numerous sect, all justified *gratis* without good works, he resolved to stifle every feeling of remorse; blasphemed the ancient Church; falsely prophesied her impending ruin; christened the Pope *Antichrist*; assumed an exclusive right to interpret scripture. In fine, like Esau's: "His hand *was* against all." Gen. xvi. v. 12.

B. b

And

And if we turn our view to the present state of the reformed Churches, we find them still decaying, by sensible degrees, and degenerating from even *their* former faith and morals. May the Author of peace and union at length re-unite our ever dear Christian brethren, especially our own Country-men, after this *trying* separation, of already two whole ages.

Does the Reformation threaten further ruin?

Yes. Certainly every well-meaning Church of Englandman will own, that these modern Sceptical Orators, or rather *Pilosophic* Doctors, whose number is daily increasing, afford him no more heart-felt devotion, than the lecture of Plato, Cicero, or Seneca: not to compare them with Confucius or Epictetus. They seem, in *pompous style*, ever catching at the applause of modern infidels, varnishing (not to say *adulterating*) the word of God, dissembling the divine mysteries, and adapting the whole to Deists; as Josephus attempted to render the old testament plausible to Pagans. "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another," &c. John v.

But

But the clearest conviction of this progress in irreligion is, to see infidelity sitting, as now she often does, unmasked, to write comments on the words of eternal life; and presuming to circumscribe that law of light, which condemns her works of darkness. When the heart is corrupted, the intellect, at least as to the intelligence of moral and divine objects, is clouded by the exhalations rising thence, and is proportionably obscured. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; or the head dictates, and the hand writes. And the principle laid down by Aristotle holds to this day: "As each man is affected, so he judges of things." Never did a vicious man, of himself give a just and proper notion of virtue, sufficient to reclaim from vice. But a lover of virtue, who; as St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin, St. Leo, St. Gregory, V. Bede, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, St. Francis de Sales, and the like; ardently pursues the study of scripture, and tradition for many years; and whose experience in the practice of virtue, serves to direct his judgment, will ever treat matters of Religion with circumspection and due deference to divine authority: and therefore, he will be worthy of our attention. On the contrary, a superficial

Philosopher, whose life is spent in amusement, profane and desultory study, idle lectures, &c. if not in vicious habits; who never seriously considered the united evidences of faith; nay, who perhaps never once read the Gospel itself throughout, with due attention; cannot be a competent judge, either of the inspired writings, or of Religious controversy.

Nor has modern philosophy made any discoveries that might seem proper to the purpose of reforming the Catholic faith of former ages. On the contrary, the primitive Church had many peculiar advantages, from its antiquity; as, the recency and vicinity of the miraculous facts and evidences, the perusal of many original and excellent manuscripts, written on the very confines of the Apostolic age, and afterwards lost during the persecutions.

Now were we, from a cursory view of some branch of philosophy, to attempt to decide against all those who have spent their lives in discussing that branch alone; our arrogance would only deserve ridicule. What then must that philosophic presumption deserve, which decides so arrogantly and peremptorily on the most arduous points of revealed religion?

Is it not easy to convince such varying Christians of error?

No. Since this sect, like a falling meteor, is continually declining, and, according to the first direction given it by Luther, visibly tending toward Socinianism and utter infidelity; a Catholic must find it difficult to point out any determinate error to a modern of this *persuasion*. The latter, as the fabulous Proteus, can assume a variety of forms. He refuses to be responsible for aught that Luther, Calvin, Beza, or all his teachers and their Synods may have advanced. His own peculiar system must be refuted: for each individual pretends to defend that alone. And if you refute it to-day, he most unconcernedly coins another against to-morrow. It is therefore an Herculean labour, to arrest such a modern, on any fixed rule or principle whence his errors would be evinced. We might as well endeavour, by means of a telescope, to catch a steady view of a meteor, dropping from the sky with precipitate celerity, as to reduce such a free-thinker to a fixed principle of argumentation.

Luther formerly, to check the beginnings of this unruly spirit of his reformed children,

threatened to renounce *the holy enterprise*; to retract all he had been teaching, and to abandon them all, unless they implicitly and tamely submitted to his whole doctrine. And then indeed all were hushed. But that grim Lion roars no more. So Henry VIII. whom Bishop Tillotson calls: "The postilion of the English Reformation," forced his ephemerian creeds on his subjects; and Elizabeth inherited part of his spirit; but now, all are allowed to choose their faith, as well as their dress. And, indeed, to civil toleration every peaceable man has a natural right: but orthodoxy can hold no religious communion with heterodoxy.

Is it more easy to argue against a Catholic?

Incomparably so, in this respect: that every Catholic is obliged to defend each tenet that has ever been once decided by the Catholic Church, either assembled in Council, or spread over the world; or whatever has been the unanimous sentiment of the Catholic Doctors in every age, from the Apostles time. Because, as the Catholic Church is, and ever has been, reputed infallible; so she may be exactly and strictly examined with the sharp eye of impartial criticism,

criticism, in any stage of her steady, uniform and regular course. And hence it is, that her adversaries have, from the beginning, been ever prying into each particular of her whole, connected, coherent and invariable doctrine; vainly hoping to descry some incoherence in her entire code. Hitherto however they have been able to descry, at most, only some unauthorised and less essential defects in discipline: as the Sun also has some apparent spots; and God alone is perfect.

But the one, original and perpetual Catholic Church still securely defies her most severe critics to discover the least blemish or inconsistency in her doctrine. Because He, who (Apocalypse iii. v. 15.) is, "The AMEN," the essential Truth, the invariable *yea*, himself remains with her to the end. Neither the Apostles, nor their lawful successors ever taught us to form our faith "according to the flesh" (as St. Paul terms it) or the wavering doctrine of carnal and worldly minded men, who now say, *It is*, and now, *It is not*. "For, as St. Paul *subjoins*, the Son of God, JESUS CHRIST, "who was preached among you by us . . . was not. *It is*, and *It is not*, but *It is (simply)* "was in him . . . Amen to God." 2. Cor. c. i.

v. 19. &c. The Catholic Church, in short, while succeeding heresies vanish from around her, continues unmoved. She still remains a glorious Luminary, not obscured by the fleeting clouds of error, or vice.

Having now reviewed the origin and progress of the Reformation; it only remains to pray to God, that as the Dove which departed from *the Ark*, not finding whereon to rest in her wandering flight, returned to it again: so this pretended Reformation, wearied at length with wandering from side to side, may return to the Catholic Church, and acquiesce in the original faith, whence she departed.

Do not the separate Societies object against some particular points?

They do. But seeing that the Catholic Church was established, *necessarily*, on infallibility; their feeble objections, repelled by this *Rock*, either rebound fatally on themselves, or fall harmless to the ground. And we must confess that the more judicious modern Protestants prudently abstain from such objections. It should, therefore, seem superfluous to dwell on the detail of such trite objections against the
faith

faith of the Catholic Church. For if, as has been proved, the one, true, perpetual and universal Church of Christ, is *infallible*; it were most absurd to dispute about her tenets. If she is infallible, we need no further controversy; if not, we can have no certainty of our faith. This alternative remains hitherto unanswered; and will be always found *unanswerable*.

May God almighty, in his tender mercies, grant to as many as possible of our ever dear, though wandering, Christian brethren, that fundamental virtue, on which their conversion chiefly depends, *Humility*. Humility is by all the holy Fathers esteemed the essential disposition, and the only way to faith. St. Irenæus, St. Antony, St. Hilarion, St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, St. Martin, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin, St. Benedict, St. Gregory, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Thomas, St. Francis of Assisium, St. Ignatius, St. Francis of Sales, &c. &c. were all *Catholics* (had we said *Donatists*, *Arians*, or *Lutherans*, &c. you would have started at the absurd novelty); and they all retained the precious gift of faith, by grounding it on *Humility*. Does not each reformed society profess, as we, to believe "the holy Ca-
" tholic

"tholic (not the *holy reformed*) Church?"
 Creed.

It is of late remarked that, to the fury of reformation, a certain lethargic indifference for all religion has succeeded. Can you rationally account for this ill-boding phenomenon?

Not to mention the love of novelty, which has now lost its influence, the following remarks deserve the attention of all sectaries, with whom the authority of neutral writers is apt to be more weighty: "I finish this article by a reflection, the truth of which must be perceived by every intelligent reader. The Religion of the *Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church* is indisputably the only good, sure and true Religion. But, at the same time, this Religion requires of its professors the most entire submission of their reason. When there happens to be in this communion a man of an unquiet, turbulent and censorious spirit, he first begins by establishing himself judge of the truth of those dogmas which are proposed to his belief; and not finding in them such a degree of evidence as is incompatible with
 " the

“ the nature of faith, he turns Protestant.
“ Soon after, seeing the incoherence of the
“ *characteristic* principles of Protestantism, he
“ seeks in Socinianism a solution of his doubts
“ and difficulties, and he becomes a Socinian.
“ Socinianism borders on Deism, it is but one
“ step short of it; and that step he makes. But
“ since Deism itself, as was said, is but an in-
“ consistent system of Religion, he plunges him-
“ self imperceptibly into Pyrrhonism; a violent
“ state, and as mortifying to self-love, as it is
“ incompatible with the nature of the human
“ understanding. He therefore finally falls in-
“ to Atheism; a situation desperately cruel, and
“ which renders a man so fatally secure, that
“ there are small hopes of his ever removing
“ thence.” Diction. Encyclop. art. *Unitarians*.
Behold another unexceptionable evidence :
“ Protestant Ministers no longer know, neither
“ what they believe, nor what they mean, nor
“ what they say.—If one asks them, is Jesus
“ Christ God? They dare not answer.—If one
“ asks them, what mysteries they admit? They
“ dare not answer.—Their interest alone deter-
“ mines their faith.—We know neither what
“ they believe, nor what they disbelieve; we
“ do not know even what they pretend to be-
“ lieve.

"lieve. Their sole manner of defending their faith, is to attack that of others." J. J. Rousseau, 11 ep. from the mount. In fine, in whatever persuasion they happen to be educated, in it the vulgar rule now is, to remain without further care.

Is it improper, among friends, to reason on the subject of religious controversy?

In this sensual, vain, modish and superficial age, too many Christian companies seem grown so complaisant, as neither to admit the mention of their crucified Saviour, nor of his salutary mysteries; much less of controversy. Yet since our Lord was not ashamed to die for us unworthy slaves; wo be to us if we "be ashamed of *him* and of *his* words." Luke, c. ix. v. 26.

There can be no more impropriety in mildly and kindly pointing out the way of salvation to a bewildered friend, than in lighting his candle to guide his steps. The decorum of circumstances ought however to be observed: *Who? When? Where?* This undertaking was indeed less feasible during the first generation of Protestants, who inherited the furious spirit of Luther; but now the generality are better disposed,
and

and if ever they seriously enter on the topic of religious controversy, they proceed more calmly and with less prevention. We should therefore be less excusable than formerly, were we to neglect such favourable opportunities of rescuing our friends and acquaintance from all the perils of error and infidelity. Nor can it seem improper to obviate some of their ordinary objections against particular points of the Catholic faith. The blessed Sacrament, however, must in the first place be especially and more amply treated of and expounded.

What is the Catholic belief, relative to the blessed Eucharist?

We believe, and ever since the institution of this great sacrament have believed, that we truly, really and substantially receive the Body and Blood, and by concomitance, the Soul and Divinity of our Saviour; who, as "our pasch, is sacrificed." 1 Cor. c. v. v. 7. And since our Redeemer is now immortal, impassible and indivisible; we receive his Body *spiritualized*, that is, endowed with those glorious qualities, of which corporeal substance, in the hands of Almighty God, is susceptible: and of which a specimen was displayed in the Transfiguration,

Of bodies thus glorified the Apostle writes :
 “ It is sown a *natural* body, it shall rise a *spiritual* body.” 1 Cor. c. xv. v. 44. This spiritual quality is evidenced in the mystery of the Resurrection, when this sacred body, *united to the Divine Person*, passed irresistibly through the otherwise impervious obstacles of the monument. And again, when “ Jesus cometh, the “ doors being shut, and stood in the midst.” John xx. v. 26.

Let any Christian, in whom the very germ of faith is not corrupted, read the Gospel itself, and St. Paul’s epistles, especially 1 Cor. c. x. and xi. and he will own that the Evangelists and St. Paul express a real participation of our spiritualized victim.

Can our Saviour exist in Heaven and in the Eucharist, at the same time : and are we authorized to believe that he really does?

The Omnipotent Word hath said it : shall weak men deny it ? “ You err, not knowing “ the *scriptures*, nor the *power* of God.” Matt. xxii. Since Christ is risen, his glorified Body is *supernaturally* become unextended, and quite independent on its ordinary, and otherwise *natural*,

tural, ambient space : it is as the angels of God " in heaven." Ibid. " All power is given to " *him*." Matt. xxviii. You err, therefore, not knowing the *scriptures*. Did not the ancient people *really* participate even of the *figurative* victims? Did they not " eat of the sacrifices, " partakers of the altar?" 1 Cor. c. x. v. 18.

But when the Truth arrived, and those figures consequently ceased ; when *He* appeared, whose name from east to west was to be " Great among " the Gentiles;" and to which a *pure oblation* was to be offered *in every place*: (See Mal. i.) What did he himself pronounce of this mystery? When he had reprimanded the Jews of Capharnaum, John vi. for pursuing *perishable* rather than *imperishable* bread (of which what he had given them was a mere prefiguration) they required a sign or miracle: " Our Fathers, *say* " *they*, did eat manna," that bread of angels being daily re-produced in the desert, to support their pilgrimage to the holy land. The Son of God answers them: " Your fathers did eat man- " na—and are dead: (*but*) this is the bread " which cometh down from heaven; that if any " man eat of it, he may not die.—And the bread " that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the " world." He therefore promises something

greater than the typical manna. Yet according to Zuinglius, Calvin and the Sacramentarian sect, the Christian manna would be less excellent than that of the Israelites: ours would seem the *figure*, theirs the *reality*.

Then those carnal Capharnaïtes, not discerning the *Divine Power*, veiled under the humble form of "the Son of Joseph," v. 42. ask; "*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*" v. 53. That he promised to give it, was clear; but they ask: How? And, though hitherto his disciples, they refuse to submit to this "hard saying." What then is his answer to their presumptuous how? "Amen, amen, (i. e. *verily*, "*verily*: mark the expression; for his *yea*, *yea*, "and *nay*, *nay*, confirm the truth; and *verily*, "*verily*, pronounced by the Sovereign Truth are "the strongest asseveration) I say unto you: "*Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and "drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.*" &c. v. 54. & seq. His answer begins with AMEN, a solemn affirmation of the immutable Truth, is confirmed by an anathema, and ratified by emphatic repetition, to v. 58.

The sect of Sacramentarians, who deny the real presence, would have done away the difficulty by informing those disciples, that this sacrament

crament neither contains the true flesh nor blood of Christ; but that what he says "is meat in-
deed, v. 56. is but a mere ideal figure; and operates, virtually, by the faith of the receiver only. But in scripture, *verily* or *indeed* implies reality. And Christ declares that we must believe the reality of these his life-giving means, or remain void of true life.

Here; though Judas seems (v. 65.) not to believe; yet Peter, the pattern of faith, being moved by the Holy Ghost, *not by flesh and blood*, answers, v. 69. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" "*(Not to the Sacramentarians)* we have believed, and have known that thou art the Christ, *the Son of God.*" If thou art God, thou canst certainly give thy flesh to eat.

As to those words; "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing?" v. 64. They do not contradict all the preceding assertions and the perpetual Catholic belief. Even Calvin owns; "The flesh profiteth nothing, when alone, but *profiteth* with the Spirit." Diluc. exp. opusc. 859. A physician, for instance, presents a remedy infused in wine, assuring his patient that unless he drinks that wine, he can not recover. The patient, mistaking it for mere wine, murmurs: and the

physician explains the whole composition, thus : it is the medicine (infused) that preserves life, the wine profiteth nothing. Does he exclude the real presence of the wine? If there be no wine in the dose, why does he say ; The wine profiteth nothing? Nay more ; “ The *flesh* profiteth nothing.” What, then, are we to conclude with the Deist, that the Word was not made flesh? In this therefore, as in every other mystery, the Catholic faith preserves the mean ; it rejects the gross notion of those carnal Jews, without altering the plain truth of Christ’s words, which insist on a true, real and substantial presence, though not in a natural, gross or animal manner.

Some modern separatists refuse to believe these words of Christ, merely because they are contrary to all their senses. They seem to say to their Divine Legislator, as the Israelites did to Moses ; “ Wilt thou also pull out our eyes ? ” Numb. xvi. v. 14. The words of Christ are nevertheless clear ; and the accomplishment ratified by the promise. The promise was ; “ The bread that I will give, is my flesh.” The actual institution ; “ This is my body.”—Promise ; “ My blood is drink indeed.” Institution ; “ This is my blood of the new testament.”

To

To such, therefore, as deny the real presence, the sentence is applicable; "You err, not knowing the scriptures."

But do not Catholics themselves err, by not understanding "the power of God"? For surely no *Body* can be at once in separate places?

On the contrary, we believe this mystery, only because we understand that the power of God is not to be circumscribed by our reason. It is chiefly in this article that we confess and adore the omnipotence of God our Saviour, by submitting both our bodily senses and our reasoning faculties to the authority of *his* words, who is *the sovereign Truth*.

Nor do we err by believing his glorified body to exist in many places at once. Is this possible? As possible, as for God himself to exist *whole and entire* in every particular place. But God is a pure spirit. What then; *how* can either a spiritual or a corporeal substance exist at once *entire* in many places? Tell us *how* a spirit can; and we will then tell you *how* a *spiritualized body* can be in many places. Tell us *how* this divine flesh is united with the Omnipotent Word? Tell us the essence of flesh and its substantial

stantial distinction from spirit? Tell us what is space or diversity of place with relation to real substance, in every truth and before God; ere you attempt to accuse us of contradiction. With God: "The nations are as a drop of "a bucket." Is. xl. v. 15. Prove therefore a contradiction; not apparent only, as in the blessed Trinity; but from the mutual exclusion of repugnant ideas; as, were we to say: Christ is in Heaven, and Christ is not in Heaven. But no such contradiction can be deduced from our faith of the real presence. Is there any connection between *spirit* and *place*? No: they imply disparate ideas. Now the same is true of a *spiritual body*, with relation to *material Place*.

The wisest Philosophers, to come at Truth, have always raised their thoughts to the most remote degree from all sensible qualities. Yet even these visible qualities, in many instances, are wonderful. What millions of entire effigies are perpetually reflected from an object placed in full view; or opposite a multiplying glass! Each effigies proceeds originally from the solar body, and is perfect in all its parts. Such reflections ought to compensate a Christian Philosopher for any detriment which his simplicity

plicity or docility may suffer from his erudition.

Why did Christ give us his flesh to eat?

To convince us that nothing is impossible to the Omnipotent Word, when he resolves to demonstrate his love to his Church. Hence the beloved disciple, about to relate the institution of this mystery, says: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them *to the end.*" John xiii. For at his death, by this mystery, he bequeathed to us: A proof of his love; a consolation for his visible departure; a perpetual memorial of his passion, for the remission of our sins; a palpable symbol and efficacious bond of union, "*one body.*"

1 Cor. c. x. v. 17. the seed, as the ancients named it, of immortality; and the pledge of our future glory. For he who worthily participates of this incorruptible food, of this Tree of life, "shall live for ever." John vi. This is, at once the demonstration of charity and the crisis of faith; sealed by the Father to carnal men; and revealed, by him alone, to his humble and docile children.

Our

Our Saviour was from the beginning, "*A hidden God.*" Yet he who firmly believes that *God* died on the cross; will equally believe that we really receive that flesh, by the *real* immolation of which he superseded all the ancient victims. Nay even the Divinity of Christ is perhaps less clearly or explicitly revealed in scripture, than his real presence in the blessed Eucharist is. Visible miracles proved the Divinity of Christ, to those who beheld his *servile* form only; and his Divinity being thus established beyond rational doubt, his *Divine Authority* has proved the truth of this absolute assertion: "*This is my body.*:" though we behold only the sensible accidents of bread.

Did previous and conspicuous types precede, as they did the incarnation, to prefigure this "*Miracle of Mysteries,*" as it is called by St. Chrysost hom. ad pop. 61?

Yes: these preparatory types were: The tree of life; Eve formed from Adam's substance, as the Church, the Spouse of Christ, is nourished with Christ's body; Melchisedec's oblation; the Paschal Lamb; Manna, *descending from the sky, on every side*, and the same identical Manna preserved

preserved in the Ark; the waters of the spiritual rock; the grapes brought from the promised land, as a pledge of future possession; the show-bread; the *real* participation of the Jewish victims, by which the faithful participants were assured of the actual and fruitful application of their sacrifices. These and the like figures preceded the great Christian Mystery.

How did our Saviour fulfil those figures?

When the true Lamb of God appeared, to supersede by his one victim all the diversity of figures: He made frequent mention of this Eucharistic mystery. See John vi. &c. And the hour being come, he said to his disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this (*Jewish and typical*) pasch with you before I suffer. "For I say to you, that from this time I "will not eat it, till it be *fulfilled in the* "kingdom of God;" that is, in my Church. Luke xxii. v. 15, 16. Then having distributed the figurative lamb to his disciples, he proceeded to fulfil and realize what had been prefigured. Behold! For here the Son of God, the Author of miracles, demands our whole attention: "And taking *bread*, he gave thanks, "and

“ and brake, and gave to them, saying, (What?)
 “ *This is my Body* which is given for you: Do
 “ this (*what I have done*) for a commemoration
 “ of me.” Ibid. v. 19 This sacred text is
 no wise ambiguous. The constant belief of
 the primitive Church accedes. Was the divine
 Author himself wanting in power, wisdom, or
 love, to perform what he said? As truly as his
 blood was to be shed; so truly, taking the Cha-
 lice, he said: “ *This is my Blood* of the *new*
 “ *testament.*” Matt. xxvi. v. 28, and 1 Cor.
 c. xi. v. 25, &c.

The first Moses had sprinkled *true* blood,
 though a mere figure of Christ's, saying: “ This
 “ is the blood of the testament:” and here Christ
 fulfilled this figure, and the reality took place.
 Thus he who had before visibly changed the
 substance of water into wine; now changes
 wine into blood, in this mystery of faith. Nay,
 he empowers and commands his ministers to do
 the same, till he come to judgment. For as St.
 Chrysostom, Hom. on the treason of Judas,
 says: “ It is not any man, who changes the
 “ oblations into the body and blood of Christ,
 “ but he who was crucified for us And as
 “ that voice which says: *Increase and multiply.*
 “ being once issued, continues always to
 “ produce

" produce its effect. . . . so this voice (*This is my body*) was *once* produced, but over all the altars of the Church to this day, and till his coming, it ratifies the sacrifice."

What have the Sacramentarians to oppose against the words of Christ?

No more, in reality, than their predecessors: "*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*" John vi. For *how* and *why* are the usual prognostics of incredulity. Manes, J. Scot, Berengarius, Luther (in some degree) Zuinglius and Calvin, all split on these fatal rocks. But all had not Berengarius's humility. Luther, unable to deny the real presence, fell into such absurdity, as to pretend that both the body of Christ and the bread were present after consecration. Though Christ says: "This (*hitherto bread*) is my body:" not, *Here is my body*. Luther tells us: "To spite the Papists (*excellent motive of faith!*) I will believe (*for surely my slave-will is free to believe what I choose*) that the bread and wine remain." See his book to the Vaudois. Never did Heresiarch less disguise the spirit of heresy, than M. Luther.

The next chief of the Reformation is, Zuinglius, with his adherents, Carlostadius, Œcolampadius, and the rest of those *Romantic* names, of the Sacramentarian tribe. They, *to spite Luther himself*, denied the real presence. They held it impossible for Christ to exist in many places at once. Luther, rushing on the opposite extreme, affirmed that Christ's humanity, being inseparable from the Deity, was present every where. Bucer, however, strove by his ambiguous distinctions, to reconcile the adverse parties. And Calvin also, the cunning and trimming French Apostle, endeavoured at once to mimic the Catholic faith of this mystery; to accede to Luther; and to coincide as much as possible with the then thriving party of Zuinglius. But, *while fools* (as Horace says) *rush on to opposite extremes*; the Catholic Church, amidst this confusion of innovations, remained alone immovable, maintaining the original mean, and the literal sense of Christ's words. For, as Dryden remarked:

"The literal sense is hard to flesh and blood.

"But nonsense never can be understood."

Hind and P.

What then is the result of all these novel refinements on the simple and plain words of consecration?

secration? It is this: The body and blood of Christ are there *verily* and *indeed* received, where they yet *verily* and *indeed* do not exist! This is truly a mystery, not of faith, but of absurdity.

St. Paul declares that, as the Jews partook of their victims; so do we truly partake of ours: (See 1 Cor. c. x. v. 16, 17, 18.) and he thence infers, that we cannot partake of idolatrous victims. He says that the unworthy receiver incurs the dreadful judgment of God: "Not *discerning* the Body of the Lord. *Therefore* *are* there many infirm and weak among you, *and* many sleep," in *death*. 1 Cor. c. xi. v. 29, 30. But how, in Zuinglius's system, could those Christians *discern* that Body, if it was not there? Why then did St. Paul insist on so diligent a preparation, or examination of conscience, if the whole were a mere and empty commemoration?

Our Saviour, indeed, encourages us to hope that, being pure, we shall abide in him, and he in us. And St. Paul, 1 Cor. c. x. v. 17. assures us, that we here become *one body* in Christ.—But the Sacramentarians; like those *spots in the Christian feasts* of Charity, or of the *Eucharist*, mentioned by St. Jude; pretend that the whole is a mere *figure, commemoration, token, or seal of faith*. If this were all the 'mystery'

the figurative manna, the paschal lamb, the tree of life and other figures of the Eucharist, would be superior to the reality itself.

In short, Christ says: "This is my Body;" which Zuinglius says: This is only bread. Such are the extravagances of *private judgment*, if it reject authority! This mystery of our Almighty Sampson, like the other's prophetic parable: "Out of the *Eater* came forth *meat*, and out of the *Strong* came forth *sweetness*," Judges xiv. v. 14, can be expounded only by the Spouse of Christ. But Sampson's adversaries, could not within three days expound the riddle." Ibid. Nor have these Sacramentarians, in almost three ages, been able to understand Christ's mystery.

What was the primitive and perpetual faith of the Church, respecting the Eucharist?

The primitive Fathers are as decisive for the Catholic belief, in this point, as the texts of scripture are clear. "They (*Simonian and Saturninian heretics*) do not admit the Eucharist and Oblations, for they do not confess that *the Eucharist is the flesh* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which (*flesh*) suffered for

" for our sins." St. Ignatius M. ep. to the
 Smyrn. (Ob. An. 107.) " As Jesus Christ our
 " Saviour, being made flesh, by the word of
 " God, assumed both flesh and blood for our
 " salvation; just so we have been taught, that
 " this nourishment, being blessed and con-
 " secrated by his own words, *is the flesh*
 " *and blood of the incarnate Jesus.*" St. Justin
 M. Ap. 1. paragr. 86. " Will Jesus Christ
 " refuse a bit of bread to him, to whom he
 " gives his own flesh and blood?" St. Cypr.
 On works and alms. " Since Christ himself
 " affirms of the bread: *This is my Body*; who
 " shall presume to doubt of it? He changed
 " water into wine, and is he not worthy
 " of our belief, that he hath changed wine into
 " blood?" St. Cyril of Jerusalem. cat. 4. myst.
 " We must consider how it is possible that one
 " and the same body, which is continually
 " distributed to so many thousands of the faith-
 " ful over the whole world, is whole in each
 " participant, and still remains whole in itself.
 " . . . I therefore rightly believe that the bread
 " is *changed* into the Body of God the
 " Word. . . . Not so, that *by being eaten* (as
 " *Melancthonists say*) it becomes the body of
 " the Word, but because by this word: *This is*

“ my Body, it is instantly changed into his
 “ Body.” St. Gregory of Nyssa, Or. catech.
 c. 37. “ Before the consecration, it is bread;
 “ but as soon as *the words of Christ* accede, it is
 “ the Body of Christ.” St. Ambr. b. 4. Of the
 Sacraments c. 5. “ That which is in the cha-
 “ lice, is that which flowed from the side of
 “ Christ.” St. Chrys. hom. 24. On 1 Cor.—
 “ Many Jews were converted, were baptized,
 “ approached to the Table of the Lord; and
 “ and drank *that same blood*, which they had
 “ cruelly spilt.” St. Aug. Sermon. 77. c. 3. “ But
 “ no one eats this flesh, without first *adoring*
 “ *it*.” Id. in Pl. 98.

But why should we continue to cite endless
 authorities, since many learned English Pro-
 testants (who were formerly very assiduous in
 the lecture of the holy Fathers) have owned that
 the real and corporal presence was believed
 by the primitive Church? And Hooker, Eccl.
 Polit. b. 5. says, that the *real* presence is a
 received opinion. Another Doctor of the
 Church of England, who was Bishop of Bath
 and Wells, an. 1685, writes thus: “ O God
 “ incarnate, *how* thou canst give us thy flesh to
 “ eat and thy blood to drink; *how* thy flesh is
 “ meat *indeed* and thy blood is drink *indeed*;
 “ *how*

" *how* thou, who art in heaven, art present
" on the altar, I can by no means explain : but
" *I firmly believe it all*, because thou hast said it;
" and I firmly rely on thy *love*, and on thy
" *omnipotence*." Exposit. of the Catech.—What
could a Catholic have said more ? But *Puritanism*, in those days, had not yet undermined
the primitive faith, so thoroughly as it has since
gradually done.

No mention has been made of *Transubstantiation*.

None. For all that we mean by this term, is,
that what was bread before consecration is substantially changed into the body of Christ, by
his words; " This is my body." And since this
miraculous change has been so proved from authority, as to require no more than our actual
faith to submit to it; it were preposterous to
dispute merely about the term.

Why does the Catholic Church distribute the
holy communion in one kind only ?

Before we answer this, permit us to ask, why
they who (of late) in general, believe neither the
sacred

sacred body nor the blood to be really present, yet make this objection? Some simple Catholic, indeed, might say; "Except you eat the flesh
 " of the Son of man, *and* drink his blood, you
 " shall not have life in you." John vi. v. 53. And to such we answer, that Christ is now impassible and indivisible; and therefore, that whoever really receives his body, necessarily must receive his blood also. That "He who
 " eateth *this bread*, shall live for ever." v. 59. Ibid. "Whosoever shall eat—*or* drink (ἢ πίνῃ)
 " —unworthily &c." 1 Cor. c. xi. v. 27. Which text some unfaithful translators have perversely rendered,—eat *and* drink.

In short the practice of the Church will suffice, in necessities, for every Catholic. The Church moreover on various occasions, from the beginning, ministered the holy sacrament in one kind; as, to children, to the sick, in time of persecution, &c. to be received at home. And as to the present *discipline*, extending this restriction, *generally*, to all the laity, it is to prevent the evident danger of effusion, or of the evaporation of the other species.

Why is there no mention of *adoration* at the last supper?

Because

Because Christ was there visibly and personally, as well as sacramentally present. But why do those kneel, who refuse to adore?

Let it therefore be our consolation, as the holy Fathers esteemed it: That as we had contracted sin and death, by a *real* participation of the flesh of the first Adam; so we are made participant of justice and life, by a *real* communication of the flesh of Jesus Christ, our second Adam. See 1 Cor. c. x. from v. 15. to v. 21.

OTHER OBJECTIONS OBVIATE D.

Is it not cruel to condemn the individuals of all sects that are separated from the Catholic Church?

Most cruel and presumptuous. But Catholics are admonished; "Not to judge, lest themselves be judged." Matt. vii. The Catholic Church prays for all Pagans, Turks, Jews and Heretics. See our Ritual, or the Office of Good-Friday. Nay more, from a pure motive of charity, we exhort them all to be reconciled to that Church to which God daily added "as many as were ordained to eternal life." Acts xiii. v. 48.
"It

"It is the property of the pious religion, not to compel, but to persuade." St. Athan. ap. 2. Urged by charity and zeal for their salvation, we admonish them of the precipice, which appears to us (if not to them) at the end of that path which they are unwarily pursuing. That physician is truly charitable, who candidly informs his patient of the lurking danger of his state, and prescribes the most safe remedy; while those carnal friends who, desiring only to see him secure and cheerful for the present, strive to shut his eyes against the impending danger, are void of true charity towards him.

Thus the true prophets of old used the most zealous severity towards those whom they strove to re-claim; "O my people, they that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee." Is. iii. "No peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." Is. xlviii. v. 22. Thus likewise St. Paul; "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, —sects (or heresies)—and such like. Of the which I foretel you—that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. v. v. 19. "A heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid." Tit. iii. v. 9. See St. Jude's epistle.—And St. John, ep. ii.

v. 9, 10, 11, where he forbids even to salute any separatist. On the contrary, the false prophets, with soothing words, were ever repeating; "*Peace, Peace: when there was no peace.*" Jer. viii. v. 14.

They accuse us of condemning unbelievers. We do not pretend to condemn; but "He that doth not believe, is (*in spite of elusive soothers*) "*already judged.*" John iii. v. 10. "Whoever therefore shall be found separated from this "*Catholic Church*, how laudably soever he may "think he lives; for this crime alone, *that he is severed from the unity of Christ*, he shall not "obtain life." St. Aug. and the other Fathers of the Council of Cirta. See also St. Cyprian, b. on the Unity of the Church, where he affirms; "That even martyrdom can not efface "*the inextinguishable stain of schismatics (remaining so) who have separated from the Church, enemies of the altar, and rebels against the sacrifice of Christ.*" p. 256, 7, 8. Cease therefore to accuse the modern Catholic Church of want of charity!

Every Innovator who invents and coins his own faith, must consequently grant his followers the same licence, of coining their faith also from scripture. But Catholics who are allowed

to coin nothing by innovation, who themselves must submit to a *definite* authority, and receive the *whole* faith, just as delivered down to them in scripture and tradition, and as defined by the Church, must require of others likewise the same submission.

But do you believe that whole nations were produced, to be inevitably victims of hell?

We do not. Salvation is offered to all. And, how small soever the number of the elect, it is still certain, that salvation is attainable by each individual. We know the precise conditions and means prescribed to us Christians; and, *to us*, further knowledge seems useless. We may however further observe; that God will judge the Pagans according to the law of nature; the ancient Jews, by the law of Moses; and all Christians, by the law of Christ. See St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, &c. Pagan, Jew, Christian, all must be manifested before the just tribunal of Christ. There each must answer, even in the first place, for his faith; and then, for his conduct; according to the natural or supernatural lights which shall have been sufficiently presented to each of them. There no supine negligence,

gligence, no affected ignorance of the law of nature, of Moses, or of Christ, shall be able to excuse the respective transgressor. He could, and consequently ought, to have known his most important duty. If a law is not notified to me, it can not oblige me; but if I shut my ears to its promulgation; as, "He would not understand that he might do well;" Ps. xxxv. v. 4. I become, in a manner, doubly guilty; both of not attending and of transgressing the will of my Sovereign.

Can no heretic be saved?

Not in that quality. His heresy will never save him. Invincible ignorance may, it is true, plead his excuse; provided he take pains proportionate to the importance of the object revealed and propounded. He moreover is not ignorant that no less than eternity is here at stake.

According to the most benign interpretation possible, we hope that several heretics may be found in invincible ignorance. And resigning all judgment to God, we subscribe to this sentiment; "They who, without passionate obli-

nacy, defend their opinion, how false soever;

E e

" who

“ who solicitously seek for the truth, ready to
 “ own their error as soon as the truth is disco-
 “ vered, are nowise to be numbered among
 “ heretics.” St. Aug. ep. 43. But we also ex-
 hort all, “ To become apt members—not pu-
 “ trid, which deserve to be cut off—to adhere
 “ to the Body (*or Catholic Church*) that they
 “ may participate of divine life.” Idem, Tract.
 26. in Joan.

May not all sects being baptized and believ-
 ing in Christ, be styled Catholics?

Catholic means universal; and is the proper
 and known epithet of that original and unfaill-
 ing Church which is spread over the universe.
 Now to judge of *Catholicism*, we ought to recur
 to the original separation of all the sects, ever
 since the nations became “ the inheritance of
 “ Christ,” or formed the Catholic Church. Ps.
 ii. Moreover the time was, when *Luther stood
 alone*. If so, how could his sect, though it after-
 ward almost equalled the progress of Arianism
 itself, ever acquire that essential characteristic of
 true *Catholicism*, which in its very prime it had
 not? Luther might, indeed, have pretended to
 trace its partial origin, by means of the Bohe-
 mian

mian Brethren, through Valdo, the Albigenses (Manichean remnants), &c. perhaps even up to Manes himself; but, by this investigation, he must have forfeited all the honour of passing for the Apostolic Founder of the Reformation. Nor would Tillotson have said; "Luther arose, " *a bold and rough man*; but a fit wedge to cleave " in sunder *so hard and knotty a block* (*his Mother Church*)—and for a long time *stood alone*." Serm. 29: However, *Catholicity* certainly implies universality of time, as well as of place.

Besides, " For a further proof; They (*sectaries*) derive their names from other men, every " sect taking its name from its author. But we " derive our name from our faith alone. You " will, however, say; if the thing be evident, " why do not all see it? Prejudice and human " respect are very powerful. But they impute " the same to us. How? Did we ever separate " from the Church? What Arch-heretics do " we follow? Have we our name from men? " Have we any such *Leader* as those have *Marcion*, these *Manichæus*, others *Arius*, &c. The " Heretics have a *name*, which upbraids them, " and strikes them dumb." St. J. Chrysost. serm. on St. Paul.—St. Irenæus also, in his treatise against heresies, remarks, that Cerdon, Marcion,

&c. *left their names* to their sects. Whereas, says he, we glory only in the name of Christ, and of his Spouse, the Catholic Church.

We own nevertheless, that when a sect becomes numerous, it is apt to affect the title of *Catholic*. And hence, as St. Augustin, b. against ep. Fundam. St. Cyril, cat 18. and others observe, the Arians, &c. affected, among themselves, each to call his sect *Catholic*; and to christen the original Catholics, *Homo-ousianists*, *Carnalists* (*Pfuchichi*) &c. But if a stranger inquired of them; whither do the Catholics go to Church? they had not the assurance, to point to one of their own Churches. "Because, if they would be understood, they must call the Church by that name, by which she is known over the whole world." See St. Aug. b. on the true Religion.

Thus in our days also, some strive to assume the title of Catholic, and to call us *Papists*, &c. But to a foreigner, inquiring after the Catholic assembly, or a Catholic Priest, they are too ingenuous to point out one of their own Churches, or Ministers. Nay it is needless to dwell on this point, since we can scarcely find two separatists who agree so, as to be in entire unity of faith. And as to the faith established by law in England,

England, this is no where else received or followed.

The confusion of such numerous *persuasions* as are now seen separate from the one original Church, is, we own, highly scandalous. Yet, if it could be shown that the ancient and perpetual Catholic Church had ever failed, the confusion and licence would be still greater, nay utterly desperate. But those who are separate from the catholic communion, unable to raise any material objection against the Catholics, recur to the old and customary stratagem, and childishly invent a by-name. Thus, *No popery* serves as a *bugbear*, and is as plausible an argument with *the many*, as the outcry; "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," formerly was at Ephesus.

Why does not the Catholic Church allow all, indiscriminately, to read the scriptures?

Because profane men are apt to apply the most sacred texts to improper or trivial subjects; because the unlearned, reading some detached and obscure parts, find it more easy to discover difficulties, than to solve them; and because the carnal Christian too often adopts examples, or

precepts, from the old testament; which regards chiefly "*them of old*;" and is perfectly adapted to the carnal people of the Jews. Whereas under a more perfect and spiritual law, we are obliged to make our "*justice abound further*;" proportionably to the additional light revealed to us.

"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. c. iii. v. 6. Yet as Christ came not to destroy, but to perfect the Jewish law, a safe guidance is requisite in its perusal; to indicate what parts have been superseded by him. And hence, the learned are permitted to read the sacred texts; but the *unlearned*, or *unstable*, must previously consult their Directors or Pastors. However, the illiterate also are exhorted to fit themselves to read, with edification, the scripture *faithfully* translated for their utility. Such has always been the Catholic discipline; and its expediency is moreover evidenced, since the Reformation has experienced the fatal consequences of her contrary indiscriminate licence.

The weak read or hear pious exhortations derived from the word of God; and till they gain strength they are nourished, as it were, "*with milk and vegetables*;" according to St. Paul. An able physician never prescribes solid food

food to the infirm; but Luther and his, in the sixteenth century, when their followers were, at least, *infirm in faith*, and were daily roused to fanaticism, ceased not to direct them to use the written word alone. "The children asked for bread." Jeremiah's Lamentations.—And these new Apostles, instead of *breaking it for them*, *ibid.* as the Mother Church had already done, first strove to infect them with prejudice and antipathy against the Catholic Church, and then presenting to them the revealed scripture, pretended that this bread of life was to be *broken to them*, not by the catholic ministry, but by dint of their own *sound judgment*. If solid food can alone restore the weak to health; then the written letter, though it often *killeth*, may alone suffice to reform the church.

In fine, to allege that text, "Search the scriptures;" John v. v. 39. is to rely on ambiguity. For *ἐξευρατε* means either, *Ye search*, or *Search ye*. And, be the intended meaning either a command or a reproach, it was applied to the Pharisees only, and that before the authority of Christ or his Church was admitted by them. But behold what follows that precarious text: "*For (the reason) you think in them to have life everlasting.*" *Ibid.*

Is

Is the solemn profession of celibacy a laudable point of Catholic Discipline?

Yes. To condemn this, as not the Deists only, but some heretics also have inconsiderately attempted to do, is to attack the whole new testament, and to slight the example and authority of all the Saints and Fathers of the primitive Church. The divine authority of our Saviour himself recommended the profession of voluntary chastity. He certainly proposed it as an heroic perfection, though he would not oblige any one to it, well knowing that the generality would not attain to its arduous observance, even though it had not been otherwise unfit for a general precept. Thus then, when he was restraining the *hitherto tolerated* licence of polygamy and divorce, and when the disciples inferred from his words, that “ If the case of a
“ man with his wife be so, it is not good (*that is*
“ *not desirable in general, not preferable, or a*
“ *greater good*) to marry. He said to them;
“ all men receive not this word, but they to
“ whom it is given. For there are, &c.—*exam-*
“ *ples both of such as remain in celibacy without*
“ *its heroic merit and reward, and also of others*
“ *who willingly and meritoriously embrace the*
“ *state*

"*state of continency*)—for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that can receive it, let him receive it." Matt. xix. v. 10, 11, 12. Thus it is clear, that to such as have the gift of continency, our Legislator at least recommends the state of celibacy, so evidently useful and conducive to the edification and propagation of his kingdom. He also cautions us against *the many* irreligious and incontinent, who (referring all to mere animal existence, or to the temporal enjoyment of pleasure, and regardless of the welfare of his church and kingdom) do not receive this word, this prerogative of virgins, enabled to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Apoc. xiv. v. 4.

In this point, St. Paul is also most clear and explicit; "I would that all men were even as myself; but every one hath his proper gift (*as above*) from God; one after this manner, and another after that. But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows; it is good for them if they so continue, even as I." 1 Cor. c. vii. v. 7, 8. And conclusively, "Therefore both he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; and he that giveth her not, doth better." v. 38. This is decisive; and the constant observance of this counsel, through all ages, by

by numerous Catholics who have had *the gift*, has sufficed to place this point above all controversy, notwithstanding the repeated efforts and evasions of successive heretics and infidels endeavouring to elude it by all sorts of prevarications.

In vain have some innovators, of late, corrupted the original texts; as, for "All receive" not (they translate, All *can* not receive) this "word." Matt. xix. For "If they do not (if they *can not* contain." 1 Cor. c. vii. v. 9. &c. The like corruptions serve only to expose that conviction of conscience, which they are unable to disguise. If they vaguely exclaim (after Luther, the Reformer of christian vestals) that it is impossible to observe virginity; this is to obtrude blasphemy; as if our Lord proposed impossibilities! It is refuted by the authority and example of the holy Fathers, and by the most numerous and indubitable facts, down from the four virgin daughters of St. Philip the Deacon, Acts xxi. Let Luther then, and his free-thinking followers answer for themselves; but to measure the gift of all others by their own, and to argue against the consciousness of facts and experience, is headlong arrogance.

In

In the old law, though adapted to a carnal people, the priests actually officiating were to be sanctified by chastity; though the propagation of the sacerdotal race depended on their matrimony.

Is not the honour which Catholics pay to Saints, Relics and Images, an abuse, at least, if not idolatry.

Judge ye.—We invoke the Saints and Angels, who live in God and rejoice at our conversion, *to pray for us*; reminding the sole author of their sanctity of his former liberality towards them; and this is also a motive exciting us to crave the like mercy. Thus, “O Lord, remember David and all his meekness.” Ps. cxxxi. “The Angel that delivereth me from all evils” “bless these boys; and let my name be called upon them, and the names of my Fathers Abraham and Isaac.” Gen. xlviii. v. 16. We honour the relics also, pious monuments and images of the Saints (as the hem of Christ’s garment, St. Paul’s aprons, &c. &c. were salutary) but *we adore God alone*. See the Council of Trent.

With

With what ardent devotion did not the primitive Christians venerate the martyrs and their precious relics? Though (to scandalize neither the Jewish nor idolatrous converts) the use of pious pictures or images was then, we own, less common. In a word, is there at present any one of the reformed persuasion, who does not blame that outrageous fury of the Reformation, which every where attacked the venerable remains of the Saints. Such profanation can not possibly be the proper produce of the mild spirit of Christianity, much less of an inspired Reformation.

Ought not Pilgrimages, and the like, to be deemed superstitious?

No: Properly performed (as in the primitive Church) in order to honour God in his Saints, and to undergo some difficulty as an atonement for sin, pilgrimages are laudable and meritorious.

Yet, in defiance both of some former abuses and latter ignorance or calumnies, it is the invariable doctrine of the Catholic Church; That pilgrimages, as well as all other external performances, observances, ceremonies and the like,
not

not excepting the frequentation of the divine sacraments, are inefficacious or insufficient to the justification of sinners, if not accompanied with humility, faith, prayer, contrition, a thorough change of heart, and an efficacious purpose of obeying the will of God, in future, by avoiding all occasions of sin and practising the good works prescribed by our Saviour and *essential* to salvation. These we must do; and those external observances, pilgrimages, &c. are not, when expedient, to be omitted.

We are, in short, to honour God with our lips; but above all, to take care that our hearts be not far from him. Because merely to say to our Saviour, *Lord, Lord* (as if he were not supreme Lord independently on our words!) must be insufficient to salvation.

What is the Catholic belief of indulgences?

If any one shall say, that whenever God remits an offence, he *always* remits the whole penance, or punishment due to divine justice;—
“the Church declares him excommunicated.”
Council of Trent, 14 Sess. Can. 12. “Whatsoever (in general, whether offence, or penance) you shall loose (or absolve from) upon earth,

F f

shall

“ shall be loosed also in heaven.” Matt. xviii. v. 18. And St. Paul, by this delegated power, 1st excommunicated the incestuous Corinthian; 2dly, assigned his penance, 2 Cor. c. v. v. 5.— 3dly, mitigated the said penance, 2 Cor. c. ii. v. 6. 4thly, alleged his motive and authority: “ For what I forgave, (*indulged, or remitted, of his temporal punishment*) if I have forgiven any thing, for your sakes have I done it in the person (i. e. *by the authority*) of Christ.” 2 Cor. c. ii. Nay, in the Mosaic dispensation, David said to Nathan; I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David; The Lord also hath taken away thy sin: Thou shalt not die. Nevertheless—for this thing, the child that is born to thee shall surely die.” 2 Kings c. 12.

Do the scriptures and the Fathers of the primitive Church mention the sacrament of penance, or confession and absolution?

— Yes. “ As the Father hath sent me, I also send you — Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.” John xx. v. 21, 22. “ Many of them that believed (*πεπιστευκότες, that is, who had already*

" *already believed, and were baptized*) came confessing and declaring their deeds." Acts xix. v. 18. "But if he says; I am a sinner;—and does not say; I have committed *this* and *that* sin; he will never cease." &c. St. Chrysost. hom. 9. on c. 6. Heb. "Let no man say within himself; I repent in private; I repent before God; God, who pardons me, knows I repent from my heart. In vain, therefore, was it said; *Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.* In vain, therefore, were the keys given to the Church of God." Idem, hom. 49.

If you desire the opinion of the Protestant Patriarch, attend: "If a sick man, *says he*, obtains the Priest's absolution, he may rest as secure as if an Angel had absolved him." Luther, Antich. progn. on the end of the world. p. 140, 141.

Finally, the sacramental absolution is *an outward sign of inward grace*, by the infusion of which grace, *alone*, sins can be effaced.

Now, as to the more or less frequent use of this sacrament, the Church having the essential power of absolving, must be allowed to adapt her discipline, occasionally, to the exigency and benefit of the faithful. The horrid crime of

suicide, and the loss of numerous British subjects, might have been prevented by the retention of this *second plank after shipwreck*, this powerful remedy against despair.

Has not the Church coined many new and needless articles of faith?

No new article of faith is ever superadded to the Apostolic Creed. But new heresies disturbing the original faith, are discussed and condemned. And by such eventual elucidations, that which had been always believed, at least *implicitly*, and without contradiction; is believed *explicitly*, to prevent innovation. Suppose a Catholic, for instance, takes a fancy to assert: That baptism administered to an infant, incapable of actual faith in the blessed Trinity, is invalid: That the washing of the feet is a sacrament: That flesh retaining blood, is to be held in abomination, and the like. He will, doubtless, allege the authority of scripture: but the Church which could alone infallibly discriminate and certify the genuine books of scripture, being admonished of the innovation, will interpose her indubitable authority; and, *then*, it will be deemed heresy, to side with the innovator.

innovator. Will this be, to coin new articles of faith? When Aetius pretended to affirm: That whoever had *his* faith, would be saved, though he were to pass his life in habitual sin: or when Aetius taught to despise the precepts of the Church, fasts, oblations and atonements offered for the dead, the episcopal prerogative, &c. the primitive Church obliged the faithful, wherever those errors appeared, to make *explicit* profession of the Catholic faith, relative to those controversies. And the Catholic faith concerning those same articles, was of late confirmed, repeated, ratified and by œcumenical authority published to all Christendom; to oppose the spreading innovations of Luther and Calvin. "New disorders compel the Church to apply "new remedies," St. Augustin, ep. 185. On the correct. of the Donat.

A SYNOPSIS OR REVIEW OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The Prophet Isaias refers us to the Catholic Church, by these words: "*This is the way, walk in it, and go not aside neither to the right hand, nor to the left.*" Is. xxx. v. 21. Some translators, indeed, confounding the re-

nowned *Highway*, with the by-paths, render this text:—"Walk ye in it, when ye turn to the "right hand, and when ye turn to the left." See the Bible dedicated to King James I. But this is, to *murder the Prophets*. Again: "*A Way* shall be there, (*speaking of the Church of Christ*) . . . and this shall be unto you a "*straight Way*, so that fools (*simple men*) shall "not err therein." Is. xxxv. v. 8.

Let us therefore suppose an unprejudiced Candidate, in quest of the true Church; the highway; the city placed on a hill, which "cannot be hid." Matt. v. v. 14. The candle, not covered, or *hidden*, . . . but set on a candlestick, "That they who come in may see "the light." Luke viii. v. 16. "The mountain "of the house of the Lord . . . prepared on the "top of the mountains, to which *all nations* "flow. Is. ii. v. 2. "The great mountain "*filling* the whole earth." Dan. ii. v. 35. He will evidently discover *the great Catholic Church*; which, by the uninterrupted succession of her Pastors, mounts up to those who were ordained by St. Peter and the other Apostles: and these were ordained by Christ. He will consequently remark, that all true Catholics are, "built upon "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,
" Jesus

“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Ephes. ii. v. 20.

Then the Candidate will proceed to a view of the doctrine, monuments, rites, customs, &c. of that great, venerable and ancient Church, which was foretold by so many prophecies, and which our Lord established on *Peter*, or the Rock. And as it is certain that *the Church of Christ* has never failed; so it is certain, that the ancient Catholic Communion is the said true and only Church of Christ. The *unfeigned* Christian Candidate will, therefore, accede to the Catholic Church.

Here moreover he will find the doctrine of the Church the same now, as it ever was. The same sacrifice, as when St. Paul wrote: “We have an *altar*, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle.” Heb. xiii. v. 10. He will find, in general, the same discipline also; the same laudable profession of virginity that was recommended by St. Paul, constantly observed, ever since our Virgin Saviour said: “He that can receive it (*attain to it*) let him.” . . . Matt. xix. v. 12. As the Prophet also prefers this state to the blessing and increase of marriage. Is. lvi. He will find the same observation of Lent, invocation of Saints, sacrifices

sacrifices for the dead, relics, moving and venerable ceremonies, ornaments, frequent use of the sign of the cross, and the like, as in the primitive ages of the Church.

If he peruses the writings of the ancient Fathers, he will rejoice to find not only the same invariable doctrine, but very many customs, rites and observances, exactly corresponding with the discipline of the Catholic Church at present. Though her discipline indeed may sometimes vary; for the object of discipline is utility, or decency; whereas the object of doctrine is revealed Truth, which is immutable.

And as the Ark was the same anno. M. 3000, when placed by Solomon in a magnificent Temple, as when covered with hides in the desert: so the Church, for about three centuries, till the conversion of Constantine, was exposed to persecution; and forced, in most places, to conceal her external magnificence: but as soon as her circumstances were changed; she adapted her discipline, with respect to the decency and splendour due to her mysteries, to her more favourable situation. But her doctrine, or faith, still remained the same. Nor could aught but gross ignorance make the successive heresy, of the Manichees, Albigenes, Vaudois, Wickliffites,

sites, Hussites, Puritans, &c. ever imagine, that the Church arising from her first state of abjection, suffering and poverty; forfeited her genuine sanctity, faith, power and privileges.

The truth is, that when Constantine began to protect the Church, crowds of good and bad flocked to the wedding chamber: the number was multiplied; but the fervour was in general rather diminished: the Church was ennobled, and enriched in temporals; but was infested by Arianism. Constantine also, unfortunately divided the Empire: and after his death the Arians, multiplying, disturbed all Christendom: swarms of Barbarians issuing from the North, about the beginning of the fifth century, added successive rages to the Arian havocks. Thus for two or three ages, the voice of the Church was often interrupted by cruel wars and heretical persecutions. Thence, (and also from the savage tyranny of the Mahometans) during the ninth, and, especially, the tenth century, her discipline began to be scandalously neglected by many: yet among others, her piety was, even then, most conspicuous; and her faith still proved inviolable. Nay the tenth age was, of all, the least disturbed by heresy.

But,

But, a few ages after, repeated and destructive schisms (especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) scandalized the weak in faith; relaxed and almost ruined ecclesiastical discipline, even in the West; and therefore rendered Luther's attempt apparently more plausible, or feasible. For a reformation *of discipline* (an avowed *requisite* in every reformed church, to this day) was desired by all the good. Luther's heresy, therefore, An. 1517, under this pretence, succeeded: and continued, not to reform, but to propagate scandal, by licence, independence, profanation and slaughter; till the Council of Trent was, at last, convened; and the raging torrent was stemmed.

At Trent the Church held forth her light, on the verge of the heretical nursery, and decreed her prudent and effectual plan of reformation. Here she separated the light from darkness, by re-producing the boundaries of her ancient faith: and all pretext for schism was removed. But a dissenting remnant was still seen disunited; to excite the vigilance and fervour of all true Catholics. Since that period, however, various abuses in point of discipline being retrenched, the Church has shone forth with new lustre. Especially the seventeenth century (not the sixteenth

teenth or Lutheran age) abounded with learned, great and good Authors. "The Church may be overcast, but she cannot be eclipsed." St. Amb. b. 4. in exam. c. 2.

The Church, on the whole, as authentic annals evidence, was never destitute, not even in the tenth age, of many holy and learned Prelates and Teachers. "The Spirit breatheth where he will." John iii. All ages are, alike, guided by the Holy Ghost. The original and Apostolic faith, deposited in scripture and tradition, was still preserved inviolate; and delivered down to us through every age. Even in the 14th, 15th and 16th ages, it was secured from essential detriment, in defiance of schism, relaxation and heresy, which obtained too generally, and spread like a deluge.

Now, with relation to such arts and sciences as do not regard man's eternal welfare, or are not absolutely connected with faith and religion, we remark in general: that those Separatists who have proceeded even beyond the pale of the Reformation, pretend that the more we advance in philosophy and all profane knowledge, the less we believe of the revealed religion. Whereas the greatest Catholic authors assure us, that all progress in *real and solid* know-

knowledge is very conducive to the preservation of faith. For human reason and divine faith, both proceed from the sole origin of all Truth. But if we preposterously attempt, as most Separatists are apt to do, to measure all revealed mysteries by the limited faculties of our reason, no wonder that we should fail in our attempt, and then pretend that we see through the veil of Religion by our sharp-sighted philosophy. Religion, however, is in reality independent on polite literature; and this is likewise, of itself, immaterial with respect to the revealed truths of Religion.

If philosophy and other useful parts of secular or polite learning were for some time incidently neglected, or less cultivated; the judicious candidate will not esteem the Church responsible for that deficiency. She is rather the more deserving of our admiration and gratitude, for having preserved from utter devaluation what she was able, of ancient manuscripts and other valuable monuments, not of Religion only, but also of the liberal arts and sciences: though our Saviour, who left her the depositary of his faith, gave her no charge to promote worldly arts and sciences. Of these treasures of antiquity the Monks had been for several ages the usual

usual depositaries: and to their faithful custody we owe the conservation of them. Those estimable benefactors of religion and literature, situated as they were, often under the rod of oppression, and surrounded by savage and cruel barbarism, not only laboured zealously to maintain ecclesiastical learning and religious discipline; but whenever the circumstances afforded a favourable interval, they did not neglect the culture of secular learning also. Witness Ven. Bede, St. J. Damascen, Alcuinus, &c. (eighth age;) St. Theodorus Stud. Archb. Hincmar, Ab. Anastasius the Biblioth. &c. (ninth age;) the renowned St. Fulbert, St. Odo, St. Dunstan, &c. (tenth age;) Archb. Lanfrank, St. Anselm, &c. (eleventh age;) in fine St. Bernard, St. Norbert, and the rest.

To exclaim, therefore, with illiberal, vague and imposing emphasis, against *the dark ages of Monkish ignorance*: and to repeat the vain echo of *the great Luminaries* (not of the seventeenth, but) *of the sixteenth Century*; with the intelligent hearer, argues a want either of a moderate knowledge of the historical facts, or of ingenuous candour, in the declaimer. For philology and all the liberal arts owe their downfal, in the East, to Mahomet; and their

rise, in the West (not to Luther, Zuinglius, or Calvin, but) to Leo X. and his family, the Medici. Though that Pope would have acquired more solid glory by reforming religious discipline, than he did by reviving profane literature.

Nay that gloomy phantom of extreme and even voluntary ignorance, is vulgarly supposed to have made its appearance, if not from the end of the sixth, at least from the 8th, 9th, or 10th age; and to have shed its dark influence, even to the beginning of the 16th age; when Luther, *the bright Angel of light*, dared to encounter it, and at last illuminated all Christendom. But if so, by whom was the true degree of European ignorance, and of immorality, its attendant, in the precedent eclipsed ages, noticed, specified and recorded? Not by any of the *multitude* of reforming Luminaries: the great one himself, who was *to rule the day*, did not yet exist: and when his ravaging Reformation reached England, it utterly destroyed our two most valuable libraries; nor was it less destructive elsewhere. And if Luther relied for information on the evidence of the scattered race of Semi-Manichees, Poor of Lions, Poplicans, Bohemian Brethren, and the like vagrants
of

of the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th ages; these were themselves, avowedly, the most illiterate of all.

We must therefore recur to the contemporary Catholic writers, who during those ages recorded, from the facts, the state of each age. The generality of these, it is true, inveigh, sometimes with oratorical, but always with laudable zeal, against certain abuses, ignorance and immorality: as, especially: that the ancient discipline and canons were in some provinces, even of the western Church, in the tenth ages; so obliterated, that several Priests, (in England, for instance) began to abandon their celibacy, and to turn their thoughts to the temporal concerns of their families. But it is unreasonable, to abuse the evidences borrowed from such zealous invectives, against the very Church itself to which those authors belonged. The too frequent abuses of those times were occasioned by repeated schisms, and by the scandalous and sacrilegious encroachments, depredations and usurpations, by which the secular power oppressed the bishoprics and abbies, that is, the sole seminaries of all literature, for several ages. But faith, in fine, does not depend on philosophy, philology, style, or the like: "The
G. g. 2. " king-

" kingdom of God is not in (*depends not on*)
 " speech but in (*on*) power." 1 Cor. c. iv.

It is a known fact, that both the Alcoran and the Reformation were introduced by arms or tumults. Reformed Churches were no where established otherwise than by secular authority.

Finally, the ancient and perpetual society which even during the most clouded and tempestuous ages, still continued visible and was acknowledged to be *the Catholic Church*, must have been at least in a preferable condition to that which had then no existence at all. Thus we ought to consult the historical facts, rather than to rely on prejudice formed from vague rumour.

Now to return to our Candidate, whom we have supposed already professing the Catholic faith: the further he advances in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, and in the practice of the Catholic religion, the more he will be convinced of the truth of the latter, charmed with its perfection and satisfied by its utility.

That incredible union which the Roman Catholic Church alone maintains in all its members, will excite his admiration and suffice to increase and confirm his faith. For according to the very original and perpetual Catholic rule,
 this

this perfect union is essential. To it the whole Catholic doctrine visibly points. The plan of no other religious society is either so wisely calculated to preserve, or in effect able actually to attain to, that perfection of union which the Catholic Church evidently and avowedly maintains. The relaxations of latter ages, occasioned, by scandalous schisms and by the pernicious examples of heretics, have indeed rendered some Catholics less humble, docile and prompt, than formerly, in submitting to the authority of the Church; yet these themselves must conform to the universality of Catholics; in every important point even of discipline; and as to faith, the whole Church essentially is, and therefore must invariably remain, united in every article.

Let the impartial Candidate view the actual state of the Catholic Church, spread over all nations. He will easily discover the incomparable union which subsists among all Catholics. All adhere to one creed; all believe, hope in, and love one God; all receive one baptism, deriving its efficacy from one victim, Jesus Christ; all are sanctified by one Divine Spirit; all are cemented in *a divine union*, by partaking of its symbol in the sacred mystery of the Eucharist: the very elements of which, as they

coalesce to form *one bread and one chalice*, continually admonish us all of our Saviour's chief commandment, to wit, of living in such mutual love, that under our divine Head we may all unite and become his *one* (mystical) Body. Again, all Catholics, *confessing their sins*, as St. James directs, *to one another*, are habituated to humility, the foundation of union; and this sacrament is also the bond of mutual obligation, confidence and charity. The Catholics, in a word, though spread over the globe, and separated not only by raging seas, but by the implacable diffensions of warring nations, and perhaps still more by natural, or national antipathies; notwithstanding, in point of religion, must (and do) "All speak the same thing." 1 Cor. c. i. v. 10. All abhor schism; all frequent the same sacraments; all believe and practise one and the same invariable religion.

This Catholic union is also evidently superior to all the destructive efforts of Time itself. Whatever was ordained (except the occasionally mutable points of mere discipline) at Jerusalem, Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon and in the other general Councils, down to that of Trent, is one and the same Catholic faith,

faith, to which no Catholic can refuse entire submission.

Such is the essential union maintained by Religion, among all the members of her one original and perpetual society. One God, one faith, one baptism, one true Church, with one head, the centre of its inviolable union. What empire, what state, what other religious society was ever united in mind and heart, as all the members of the Catholic Church evidently are? The view, therefore, of this union will confirm the faith of the Candidate whom we have here supposed: it will support his hope and animate his charity. He will exult, with David, and cry out: "Behold how good and how pleasant " it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Pf. cxx. For: "I am a partaker with all them " that fear thee, and that keep thy command- " ments." Pf. cxviii.

But to conclude: Faith, if truly divine, excludes all doubt. Now whoever rejects all infallible rule of faith, and supposes the universal Church liable to essential error, that is, to err in faith; would seem imprudent did he not doubt of the authenticity of each book in the sacred canon, of the original text amidst the various readings, &c. and consequently of every mystery

mystery of faith. For he will surely never presume to be able to examine, compare and comprehend the whole scripture: to weigh, in the fallible scale of private judgment, all the arguments that have been written for and against the meaning of each controverted text, or each point of faith. And, as to the guidance of *the private spirit*, it is the most absurd enthusiasm, to pretend that *the Spirit of Truth* is daily moving profane men and women, to utter incoherent and contradictory nonsense. "No prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation." 2 Peter c. i. v. 20.

In fine, since the only true rule of our faith is: To believe all that God has revealed: and since the true Church of Christ can alone certify, what has been revealed; if a man continues wilfully to doubt of any point defined by the universal Church, he loses divine faith. God reveals: the Church, having received the divine revelations, interprets and propounds. The mysteries revealed are all above our capacity: they are, moreover, admirably and essentially connected with each other. The same motive, therefore, commands our submission to each particular mystery, as to all the rest: and the same pride that refuses to submit to one, would reject

reject the rest, if they did not happen to coincide with each man's way of thinking or human prejudices.

Happy then are they who live within the pale of the *one, holy, Catholic, Apostolic and infallible Church*; the ark of salvation, and mother of all the saints. In other instances we solicitously seek the originals; and shall we be found indifferent, with regard only to the true and original faith, on which depends our eternal welfare?

A VIEW OF THE MORAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

What are the principal moral duties taught in the Catholic Church?

To love the Lord our God, with our whole heart, and our neighbours as ourselves. For as, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" Heb. xi. so, "Faith without works is dead." St. James ii.

Charity is the queen of all virtues; where she reigns, there they all readily obey. But, on the contrary, the imposing doctrine, of salvation by faith alone, which Luther and Whitfield, two renowned

renowned enthusiasts, invented, is rejected by our Saviour's own words: "Not every one that
 " faith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the
 " kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will*
 " of my Father." Matt. vii. v. 21. That is to
 say, We must believe him to be the supreme
 Lord, since whether we call him so or not, Lord
 he absolutely is; but this faith, if alone, is in-
 sufficient to salvation. In vain we believe in
 God our Saviour, unless we love him; nor do
 we truly love him, unless we keep his command-
 ments and execute his known will.

The moral law of Christ is easily learned by
 them who are not afraid of finding its precepts;
 its observation is also pleasant to men of good
 will, who are moved by faith, sustained by hope,
 and animated by charity. But since "the per-
 " versity of human nature, says St. Augustin,
 " consists in affecting to enjoy what should be
 " only used, and to use what should be enjoyed,
 " *frui utendis, & uti fruendis*;" this law must
 consequently appear disagreeable to those who,
 seduced by their passions, have misplaced their
enjoyment, in the good things of this life; which
 are to be *used*, as St. Paul directs, as if we used
 them not.

They

They who thus attempt to change the order of God, by confounding the means with the end; who would establish their *enjoyments* in this exile, independent on the only solid foundation, of a good conscience; who pretend to serve two masters; who affect rather to display fashionable sentences, than sound morality; and who fly the gospel, to patronize *a prudent enjoyment of this life*, as if it were "good for us" "to be here;" are "enemies of the cross of Christ," and Epicurean Christians. But as the infidel prematurely affects intuition, so does the sensualist fruition in this life.

The gospel clearly directs us to withdraw at least our affections from the things of this world, and even from life itself. But as presumptuous reason quibbles, to evade the mysteries of faith; so the sensual inclination of the heart (alas! in the generality even of the faithful) invents subtle evasions, to elude self denial and all the most essential precepts of the gospel.

The gospel teaches us, chiefly, to resign ourselves, or to submit our own wills to the supreme will of God in all things; and so to become obedient even unto death. To remedy the rebellion of self-will against the divine will, occasioned

sioned by original, and reinforced by actual sin, our Saviour commands us, to take up our cross every day; to deny ourselves; to watch *before-hand* against the occasions, lest, tempted by them, we be led to sin; and to pray without ceasing, that *his will be done*.

The cross therefore is the standard of Christ, and self-denial is the badge of each Christian. A true Christian regards this life as a mere passage, through hostile deserts, to that promised kingdom where he is to meet with all his true friends and to enjoy his Creator. But, till then, his faith is to be tried by tribulations and temptations, and his heart to be purified, as gold in the crucible. His life is a warfare; Christ is his leader; the cross his standard; patience his glory; prayer his refuge and strength; diffidence in himself, joined with confidence in God, is his military discipline; and charity is his panoply. Thus a Christian, having put on the Lord Jesus Christ, wages a perpetual war with his own body and his passions; till he has subjected these domestic enemies to reason and to the law of God. Hence self-contempt, continual self-denial and humble prayer, form the essential characteristic of the elect. By these,
we

we become obedient to God ; docile, charitable and obliging to our neighbours ; and at peace within ourselves. For as soon as we shall have mortified and subdued our corrupt nature and self-will, and shall have abolished the reign of self-love ; God will establish his kingdom in our hearts.

Self-love is the muddy spring which, if not frequently purged by self-denial, defiles the whole current of our actions. Wherefore our all-wise Legislator declares, that whoever loves his own soul, *or bodily life*, shall lose it ; and that he who hates the same, shall preserve it for life everlasting.

Yet in this spiritual combat we shall conquer rather by prudent, gentle and constant perseverance and humble prayer, than by force, vehemence and confused agitation. Hence the voluntary fastings and mortifications of a Christian should be private, prudent, cheerful, and free from all asperity towards others who do not the same. In this view also we must ever prefer such crosses as proceed from providence, to those which we may choose to impose on ourselves. Thus, for instance, to comply cheerfully, on every emergency, with the will of others, is an excellent cross.

In short, our will must never attempt to precede, but must always obsequiously follow, the known will of God; because we aim at an entire submission of our will; whereas our own choice, even of crosses, is apt in some measure rather to flatter self-will. To this purpose we may likewise observe, that not to fret at irremediable ills, or to brood over our misfortunes; but to regard them, with due resignation, in the best light or point of view, is true Christian philosophy. . . . "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Matt. vi. v. ult.

Now in order to arrive at the *rare* virtue of self-denial, we must acquire an habitual and intimate sense of the presence of God. And as every habit is attainable by frequent acts, we must *watch and pray*, frequently raising our thoughts and hearts to God, by acts of thanksgiving, praise and love; we must read daily some book of piety, as the lives of the Saints, to renew our devotion; and approach frequently to the sacraments, the fountains of health and life; till we learn *to walk with God*, or to demean ourselves decently wherever we be, as always acting in the presence of our Judge. We must moreover be faithful in our ordinary or daily actions and performances, doing them all with alacrity and

and a pure intention of conforming thereby to the will of God; beginning them by the sign of the cross, invoking the divine assistance and recommending the success to God. How happy and meritorious would our whole life be, were it habitually influenced by this infallible principle of faith, to wit; God sees all we do or suffer for his sake; and when we pray, he hears not only our words, but our very thoughts and intentions.

With respect, in fine, to our neighbours; To love and assist the poor, is to purchase heaven; especially if we consider them as representatives of our dear Redeemer. But to love our very enemies, is a miracle of grace and the summit of Christian perfection. We have to this end, both our Lord's precept and precedent: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls," Matt. xi. We must regard our enemies as images of God and our fellow candidates for heaven; who (as ourselves also) being agitated by the storms of passions, and driven on the precipices of sin, are perpetually exposed to the most fatal disasters; are pursued by their spiritual enemies and finally ruined, unless our Saviour, out
of

of pure mercy, rescues them by his grace. In this light, when Christ cast out devils, he commonly chid not the possessed, but rather the possessor. And his Saints also teach us to love our enemies themselves, while we detest their errors and vices, and abhor the infernal abettors of evil, who are the professed enemies of all order and virtue.

We must therefore earnestly implore the divine grace and that light of truth, by which we may see that each enemy, in some degree, *knows not what he is doing*. For he is truly injuring his own soul, and enhancing at once both his own guilt and the crown of his patient adversary. If therefore we thus form a right judgment of the case, we shall pity our enemies, and hate only the author of sin and instigator of evil. We shall put the best interpretation on our neighbour's conduct: shall have no enemy but the devil, the sworn enemy of true virtue: and both our friends and enemies will co-operate to our good. By offending the Creator, we have deserved punishment from all his creatures; yet, by forgiving, we measure his forgiveness.

In a word, life is truly short, and fraught with perils and misery; let us therefore not aggra-

vite

vate our wretched thralldom, by mutual envy, strife, or enmity; but rather sympathize with our fellow victims of death.

Such is, and ever has been, the moral doctrine of the Catholic Church. Prayer moreover, and only faithful, humble, fervent and perseverant prayer, relying entirely on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, our divine Mediator, is able to unite us with *God our Saviour, without whose grace we* "can do nothing." John xv. v. 5.

A Catholic must not have less confidence in the infinite merits of his Redeemer (who healed all who touched him, Matt. xiv. v. ult.) because Luther, &c. attempted, by misinterpreting the application of those merits, to exclude the necessity of co-operation, or the merit of good works. Nor ought we to have less esteem for *humanity and beneficence*, because some moderns seem to repeat, abuse and profane the names of these excellent virtues; and would fain make *all* Religion consist in the empty sound of *beneficence*; not in that real and daily practice of fraternal charity, which proceeds purely from Christian charity or the love of God. To whom be all glory for ever. Amen.

A circular ink stamp from the British Museum. The words "BRITISH" and "MUSEUM" are curved along the top and bottom inner edges of the circle, respectively. In the center, the date "6 DE 71" is printed horizontally. The stamp is slightly faded and positioned in the upper right quadrant of the document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

In the Press, and speedily will be published,

[BY THE SAME AUTHOR]

The Second Edition of

R U D I M E N T S

O F

E N G L I S H G R A M M A R.

Price TWO SHILLINGS bound.

In the Fifth and Sixth Editions

[by the same author]

The Second Edition of

RUDIMENT

OF

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Price two shillings bound

